

# **The City of College Park, Maryland**

Report of the Charter Review Commission 18-R-23

May 31, 2019

# Introduction

When the nation's founders were deciding the shape and structure of the then-new democratic republic, one of the issues they had to deal with was the length of time that elected government officials would hold office. As Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay laid out the arguments for the different lengths of terms in *The Federalist Papers*, they admitted that there was no perfect length-of-term for elected officials. Arguing for a term longer than a year for the House of Representatives, Hamilton used the differing terms for elected officials in the 13 states as an example.

What Hamilton and the other founders wanted was a term of office long enough to promote good governance, but not so long that it would lead to tyranny. The Constitution sets out two, four and six-year terms for our federal elected officials, and while the length-of-terms for municipal governments across the nation varies more widely, the terms in the Constitution are now customary.

We heard the echoes of Hamilton's arguments as Charter Review Commission 18-R-23 attempted to evaluate the pros and cons of lengthening the term for College Park's elected officials from two years to four years, and whether those terms should be staggered for Councilmembers.

As Commissioners, we carried out our duties to the best of our abilities by holding a pair of public forums and soliciting comments online, in person and in the mail. We also sought out information from other cities that changed the length of their terms and examined the relevant information and political discourse over the length of the terms for Mayor and Council and the merits of staggering those terms.

The Charter Review Commission sought public input by hosting public forums, in the Council Chambers and at Public Works' Davis Hall. The Commission also reviewed public comment submitted online through a portal hosted on the City of College Park website and other means. The Commission thanks the individuals of the City of College Park who voiced their opinions and engaged themselves in this process.

While public opinion appears to favor keeping two-year terms, our charge was to review and evaluate the length of the terms for the offices of Mayor and Councilmembers.

Since the Charter Review Commission was not charged with making a recommendation, we do not give one, but hope that this report will give the Mayor and Council a solid foundation on the issue.

In total, 94 people commented on the issue either in written comments, in the public forums or on comment cards submitted to the Commission. Some commenters provided their views to us in multiple formats. Of the 94 comments, 60 were submitted on pre-printed cards that were handed to the Commission during the March 11<sup>th</sup> public forum held at Davis Hall.

All 60 pre-printed cards submitted to the Commission supported the maintenance of two-year terms. In total, we received 82 comments in opposition to a change from two-year terms, 10 comments in support of a change to a four-year term, and two comments that addressed issues not directly relevant to term length.

Only a limited subset of commenters expressed a position regarding staggered terms, with seven commenters supporting the implementation of staggered terms if terms were extended to four years, and ten commenters expressing opposition to staggered terms.

To help the Council with their decision, the Commission focused upon eight themes that recurred in the public comments and subsequently researched those themes. The Commission accounted for the specific nature of the City of College Park, as well as other Maryland municipalities that have appointed committees to examine this charge. We used these themes as the organizing structure for our report, which is separated into the following sections:

1. Voter engagement
2. Student participation
3. Accountability
4. Recall provision
5. Continuity
6. Election costs and a consideration of staggered terms

7. Frequency of campaigns from the candidates' perspective
8. Commitment to four-year term

The Commission thanks Mayor Wojahn, District 1 Councilmembers Kabir and Kennedy, District 2 Councilmembers Dennis and Brennan, District 3 Councilmembers Day and Rigg, and District 4 Councilmembers Mitchell and Kujawa for giving us the opportunity to examine this important issue. We also recognize the valuable assistance of professional staff liaison Janeen Miller and Contract Secretary Sheryl DeWalt. Finally, thank you to the residents of College Park who participated in this effort.

Sincerely,

Chairman Cameron Thurston and Vice Chairman Brooks Boliek

Dan Alpert

Normand Bernache

Nora Eidelman

Virdina Gibbs

Peter King

John Krouse

Ray Ranker

Nathan Rickard

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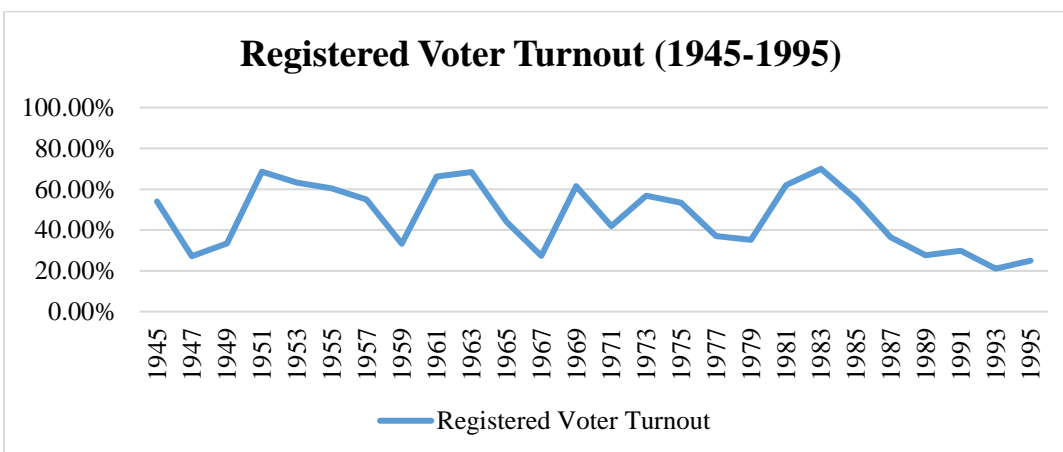
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## 1. VOTER ENGAGEMENT

One of the concerns voiced by citizens commenting to the Charter Review Commission is the low voter turnout in College Park.<sup>1</sup> In these comments, a question has been raised as to whether a change in term length will lead to greater voter participation in elections:

“[V]oters in College Park do not engage with their elected leaders or local government as is seen from voting statistics. Only a small percentage of registered voters, of order 10 percent, vote in City elections. . . . Will anything change if the length of term is increased to four years? More voter participation? More accountable elected? Very likely not.”<sup>2</sup>

The City of College Park’s voting statistics demonstrate a substantial change in voter participation over the last seventy years.<sup>3</sup> In the half century between 1945 and 1991, registered voter turnout in municipal elections in College Park fluctuated from a low of 27 percent to a high of 70 percent. As shown in the graph below,<sup>4</sup> registered voter turnout frequently exceeded 50 percent over that time period:



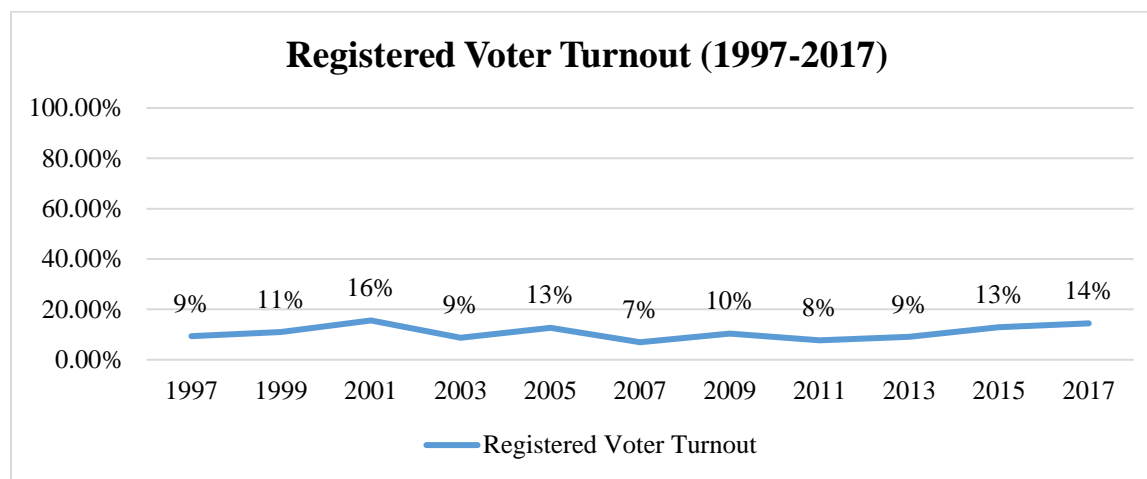
<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., written comments from L. Havis to Charter Review Commission (Apr. 19, 2019) and written comments from M. King to Charter Review Commission (Mar. 10, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Written comments from S. Balachandran to Charter Review Commission (Apr. 30, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Voting statistics are taken from “College Park Voter Statistics,” available online at: <https://www.collegeparkmd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/939/College-Park-Voter-Statistics-1945-Current?bidId=>

<sup>4</sup> For ease of reference and consistency of comparisons, this chart omits the following elections (with the percentage of registered voter turnout set out in parentheses): referendum 1976 (17.79%); referendum 1977 (27.84%); referendum 1984 (20.04%); run-off 1985 (61.81%); and special 1986 (24.45%).

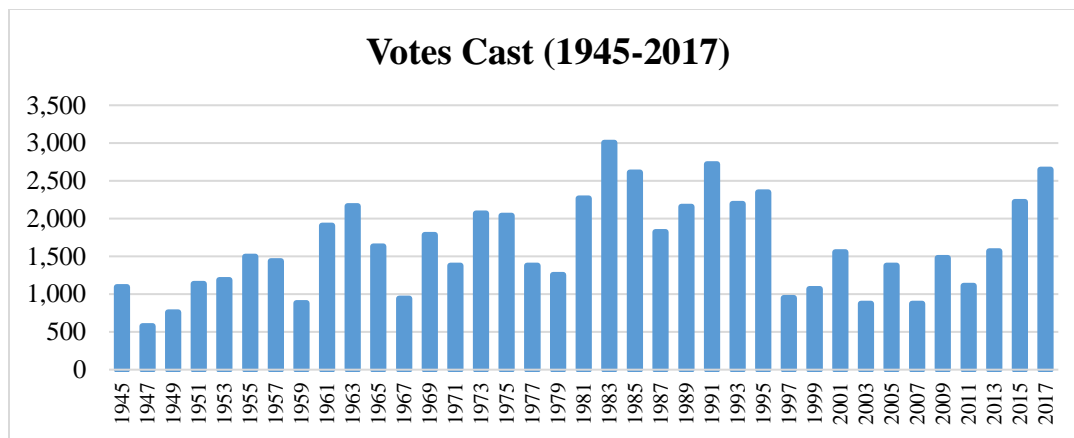
In 1993 registered voter turnout fell to 21 percent, marking the first time less than 27 percent of registered voters cast a ballot. Turnout rebounded somewhat to 25 percent in 1995. Since 1995, registered voter turnout in the City plummeted, falling to a low of seven percent and high of 16 percent. While turnout fell to less than 10 percent in 1997, the general trend shows a small, but steadily increasing turnout. As depicted in the graph below, registered voter turnout has increased over the last three elections and, in 2017, was at the highest levels reported for the City since 2001:



In the last College Park election conducted in 2017, 2,648 out of 18,299 registered voters cast a ballot. Although this reflected a roughly sixty percent increase in voter turnout compared to the municipal election held in 2013 (where 1,568 out of 17,628 registered voters cast ballots) and doubled voter turnout compared to 2007 (where 873 out of 12,544 registered voters cast ballots), the total number of voters participating remained small in the larger, historical context of College Park.

In absolute terms, more voters cast ballots in the 1991 College Park elections (2,718) despite the fact that there were less than half the number of registered voters (9,135) in the City at the time. The record number of votes cast in the City occurred in the 1983 College Park elections, when 3,003 out of 4,291 voters participated.

Nevertheless, the increase in votes cast in each of the last three College Park elections, as shown in the table below, has been substantial. This also coincides with an increase in contested elections.



The declines in registered voter turnout in College Park’s elections are consistent with declines in registered voter turnout in local elections across the country. Professors at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay reviewing elections data from 144 cities in the United States, found the percentage of these cities’ voting-age population casting ballots declined from an average of 26.6 percent in 2001 to 20.9 percent in 2011.<sup>5</sup> The U.S. Vote Foundation observes that professors at the University of Michigan and Rice University found in a separate study that “[b]etween 1979 and 2003 the turnout in local elections declined by an average of 20 percent, representing a loss of one percentage point of voter turnout per election cycle.”<sup>6</sup>

Both the substantial decline in the percentage of registered voters participating in College Park elections over the last 70 years and the recent, significant upward trend in registered voter turnout in the City in each of the last three elections, are factors that merit consideration in evaluating a change in term length for the City’s elected officials, as well as the frequency and make-up of municipal elections in College Park.

First, any change to the character of elections should be evaluated in the context of what impact that change may have on voter participation. Is the change proposed likely to encourage or

<sup>5</sup> See Mike Maciag, “Voter Turnout Plummeting in Local Elections,” *Governing* (Oct. 2014), <https://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-voter-turnout-municipal-elections.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Joshua Greenbaum and Neil Harwood, “Fixing the Problem of Low Voter Turnout in US Local Elections: A Data Driven Solution,” U.S. Vote Foundation (June 2017) at 5; [https://www.usvotefoundation.org/sites/default/files/US\\_Vote\\_LOCElections\\_Whitepaper.pdf](https://www.usvotefoundation.org/sites/default/files/US_Vote_LOCElections_Whitepaper.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Zoltan J. Hajnal, “Why Does No One Vote in Local Elections?,” *New York Times* (Oct. 22, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/22/opinion/why-does-no-one-vote-in-local-elections.html>.



discourage registered voters from casting ballots? Or, is the change unlikely to have any significant impact?

Second, given the small minority of registered voters within the City who currently cast ballots in College Park municipal elections, what likely might a change in the character of these elections portend for the functioning of democracy in the City? At present, low turnout means that City elections are susceptible to determination by small, organized groups with unified interests that may not reflect the views of the larger community.

Zoltan J. Hajnal, a professor of political science at the University of California San Diego and the author of the 2009 book “America’s Uneven Democracy: Turnout, Race, and Representation in City Politics,” argues that low participation creates a risk that “an extraordinarily unrepresentative set of residents determines how local governments distribute services and spend” funds that local governments control. This conclusion is supported by the research of Sara Anzia, a professor of political science at the University of California Berkeley, who found that “[m]embers of interest groups with a large stake in an election outcome turn out at high rates regardless of election timing, and their efforts to mobilize and persuade voters have a greater impact when turnout is low.”<sup>7</sup>

Concerns regarding the risks presented by low voter participation are further heightened in College Park because of a significant and sustained difference in voter turnout and votes cast between districts in the City. This issue was raised by residents to the Charter Review Commission. At the first public forum, Mr. David Gray observed: “We have large disparity between good participation in each Council, sorry each district. So Districts 2 and 4 have much smaller voter turnouts than Districts 1 and 3.”<sup>8</sup> Similarly, at the same forum, Mr. Mark Shroder told us: “There are many elections where the first district had more than half the voters, people who actually turned out and got one quarter of the Council.”<sup>9</sup>

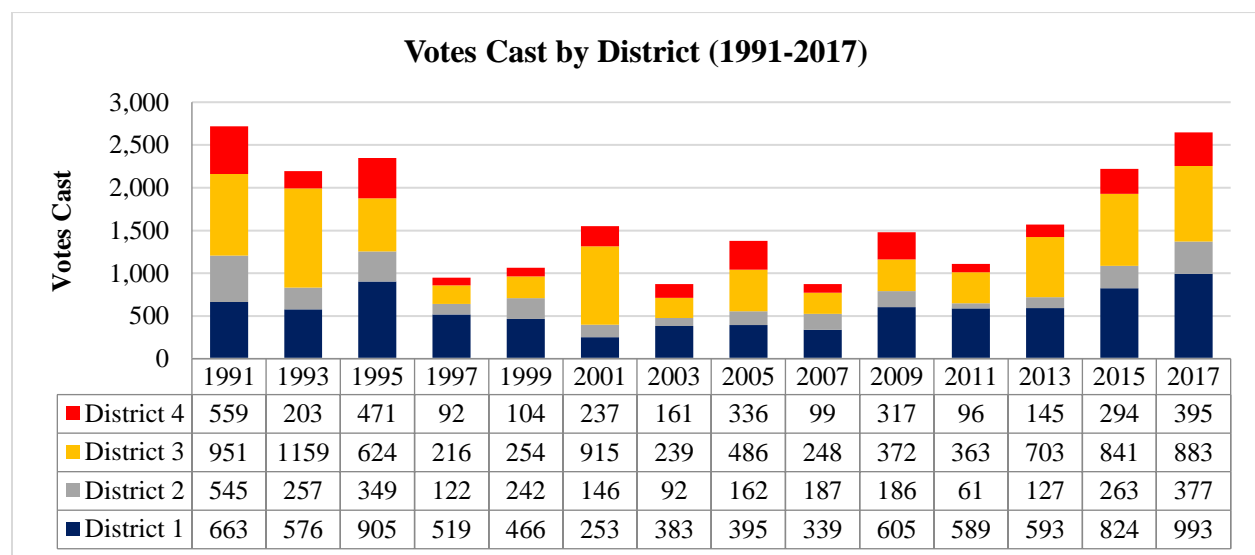
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<sup>7</sup> Sarah F. Anzia, “Election Timing and the Electoral Influence of Interest Groups,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (Apr. 2011), <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1017/S0022381611000028>.

<sup>8</sup> Transcript of Public Forum #1 (Feb. 11, 2019) at p. 5, lines 2-7.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at p. 10, lines 19-21. See also written comments from M. King to Charter Review Commission (Mar. 10, 2019) (“Some districts have voter turnout of less than 10%.”).

Although there are a wide variety of factors involved in voter turnout in a given district during a given election, a review of City voting records supports the observation that there are substantially different voting patterns in the four districts of College Park. Specifically, there is a consistent history of higher levels of participation and voting in Districts 1 and 3 than there has been in Districts 2 and 4. As shown in the table below, over the last fourteen regular municipal elections (1991-2017), votes cast in Districts 1 and 3 have accounted for the vast majority (71.2 percent) of the votes cast in municipal elections in College Park.<sup>10</sup> Over these fourteen elections, there have been 8,254 total votes cast in District 3 and 8,103 total votes cast in District 1 compared to 3,509 total votes cast in District 4 and 3,116 total votes cast in District 2.



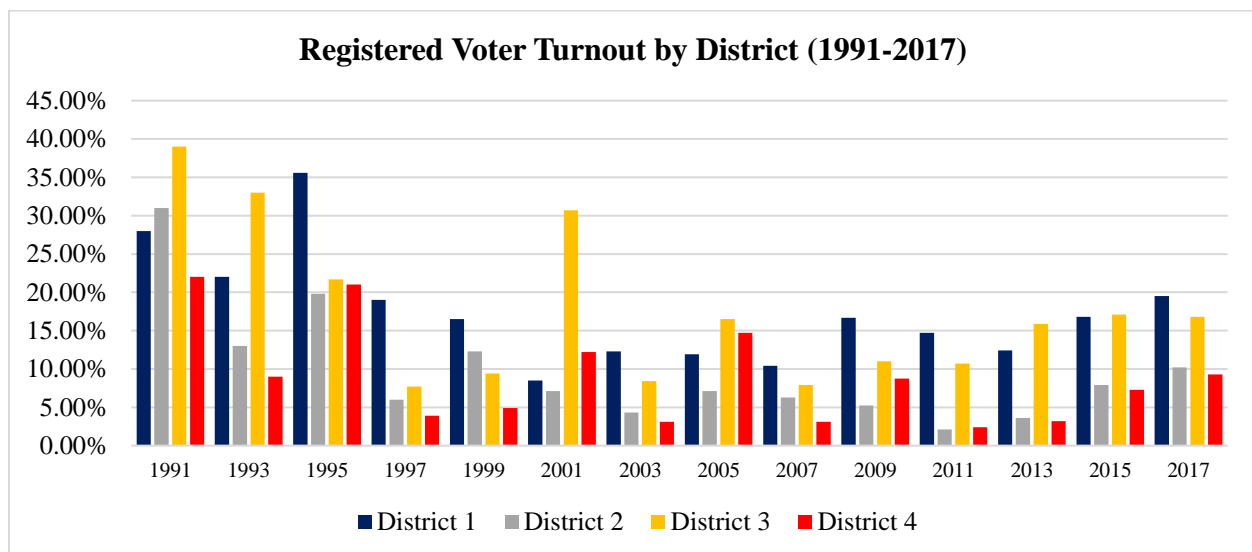
A factor that may contribute to these results is the number of contested elections held for Councilmember positions in each of these districts. Roughly eighty percent of the Council elections held in Districts 1 and 3 were contested between 1991 and 2017. Thirteen out of the fourteen elections in District 1 and nine of the fourteen in District 3 were contested while less than half of the Council elections held in Districts 2 and 4 were contested (six of the fourteen for both Districts 2 and 4). Nevertheless, registered voter-turnout levels have been consistently poorer in Districts 2 and 4 when compared to Districts 1 and 3, regardless of whether an election is contested. Throughout the last fourteen elections, registered voter turnout in District 4 has

<sup>10</sup> District voting statistics are taken from “City Election History” available online at: <https://www.collegeparkmd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/940/ELECTION-RESULTS-for-WEBSITE?bidId=>

exceeded 10 percent only four times (1991, 1995, 2001, and 2005) and in 1995, the second highest turnout levels recorded for the district, only two candidates ran for Council seats. Similarly, registered voter turnout in District 2 has exceeded 10 percent just five times over the last fourteen elections (1991, 1993, 1995, 1999, and 2017); in two of those five elections (1993 and 1995), only two candidates ran for the Council seats.

In contrast, only once in the last 14 elections did voter turnout in District 1 dip below ten percent and it has been above 15 percent in eight of those elections. For District 3, registered voter turnout has only been below 10 percent in four of the last 14 elections and was above 15 percent in eight of those elections. Districts 2 (1991 and 1995) and 4 (1991 and 1995) have only experienced registered voter turnout levels above 15 percent in four of the 28 elections held in those districts, collectively, since 1991.

The chart below summarized registered voter turnout levels, by district, in each of the regular municipal elections held between 1991 and 2017. In addition to the above discussion, the chart demonstrates that a significant component in increased voter participation over the last few municipal elections has been the substantial increase in turnout in Districts 2 and 4 in the 2015 and 2017 elections compared to the historically low levels experienced in the 2011 elections, where registered voter turnout was 2.1 percent and 2.4 percent, respectively, for each of those districts.



An important consideration in evaluating the impact of term-length is whether a change in the character of municipal elections enhances or mitigates the potential risks created by low registered voter turnout.

**A. Registered Voter Turnout Is Most Substantially Impacted by Timing, but Other Characteristics Matter as Well**

The academic literature on the issue of turnout has continually found that the “factor most strongly associated with turnout in elections is election timing” as “empirical evidence consistently finds that election timing has a substantially larger effect on local turnout than city size.”<sup>11</sup> “[A] seminal study by Hajnal and Lewis (2003) found that half of the variance in turnout in California cities was explained by election timing alone.”<sup>12</sup>

In another study of 340 municipal elections held in 144 large cities, the authors found that “[s]hifting an election from a non-presidential year to November of a presidential year leads to an 18.5 percent boost in turnout, on average.”<sup>13</sup> The authors further found that “[s]hifting from a non-midterm election year to November of a midterm election year leads to an 8.7-point bump in turnout, on average.” The authors observed that these conclusions were consistent with the experiences of cities that had moved elections to on-cycle years:

Over the past few years, a number of U.S. cities have switched from holding their mayoral elections in nonpresidential years to presidential years. For instance, in 1999 voters in Baltimore, Maryland approved a measure to move the general election for the Office of Mayor from 2003 to November of 2004, with the goals of reducing the cost of the electoral process and increasing voter turnout for the mayoral race by scheduling it to line up with the 2004 presidential election. After the 2004 election, voters rescinded the measure. The next mayoral election was held in 2007. Turnout increased in Baltimore in 2004 relative to the previous election and decreased in 2007 relative to turnout in 2004. As another example, Virginia Beach, Virginia typically has its mayoral elections in May of presidential years but in 2008 held its election in November of 2008. Mayoral turnout increased substantially in 2008 relative to the previous mayoral election (increase of 48

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<sup>11</sup> Melissa Marschall and John Lappie, “Turnout in Local Elections: Is Timing Really Everything,” *Election Law Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2018) pp. 221-222 (note omitted).

<sup>12</sup> Id.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas M. Holbrook and Aaron C. Weinschenk, “Campaigns, Mobilization, and Turnout in Mayoral Elections,” *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (2014) (footnote omitted).

percentage points from 2004 turnout level). And another group of cities hold mayoral elections every two years, alternating between midterm and presidential election cycles.<sup>14</sup>

Accordingly, municipalities seeking to increase voter participation have considered moving local elections to on-cycle election dates corresponding with state and federal elections. In 2015, the City of Takoma Park placed an advisory question before its voters in the municipal election to determine support for the following proposition: “the City of Takoma Park municipal elections for Mayor and Councilmembers should be changed to the Tuesday following the first Monday in November in each even-numbered year in order to coincide with Maryland statewide general elections.”<sup>15</sup> By a margin of 76.18 percent in favor to 15.91 percent opposed, voters expressed support for such a change.<sup>16</sup> Peter Kovar, a Councilmember, explained that in Takoma Park, “[l]ocal turnout has averaged about 10 percent, while it’s been around 40 percent in Gubernatorial years, and over 75 percent in recent Presidential years.”<sup>17</sup> The city ultimately changed its election dates and Takoma Park’s next election is scheduled to take place on November 3, 2020.<sup>18</sup>

In California, the state legislature passed, and the governor approved, Senate Bill 415, the California Voter Participation Rights Act.<sup>19</sup> The legislation precludes municipal governments from holding local elections on dates that are not concurrent with statewide elections if voter turnout has been significantly less in the local election compared to the statewide election. As the bill’s own summary explains, the state of California defined the term “significantly less” as

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<sup>14</sup> Id. at n.17.

<sup>15</sup> See <https://takomaparkmd.gov/results-of-past-elections/>.

<sup>16</sup> Id. In 2017, the city conducted public hearings and sought comments regarding the proposal to move election dates to coincide with Maryland statewide general elections. See <https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/agendas/2017/council-20170301-1.pdf>. In announcing the public hearing, the City observed that “[h]olding City and State elections together will increase voter turnout in City elections and increase the diversity of residents who turn out to vote.” Id.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.councilmemberkovar.com/blog/2017/2/28/election-synchronization>

<sup>18</sup> See <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-clerk/city-election-voter-registration-information/>.

<sup>19</sup> See [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160SB415](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB415).

constituting turnout in a nonconcurrent local election that was, on average, 25 percent or less of that of turnout by that locality for a statewide election in the previous four statewide elections.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, alterations to other aspects of local elections may also have a significant, albeit less substantial, impact on voter turnout. Researchers have questioned whether factors other than institutions have a significant impact on voter turnout. In one study, the authors found that the way municipal campaigns are conducted can have a significant impact on turnout.<sup>21</sup> In particular, more contested elections were correlated with higher levels of registered voter turnout:

The effect of the total amount of campaign spending on turnout is notable, consistent across models, and even exceeds the effects of some institutional variables commonly thought to be important to local turnout patterns (e.g., the use of a partisan ballot). The burden for low turnout, then, falls not just on institutional design but also on the nature of political contests and the factors that encourage or discourage intense, competitive campaigns.<sup>22</sup>

A review of district voting data within College Park supports this observation, as registered voter turnout levels vary significantly dependent upon whether elections are contested or uncontested. Over the last fourteen regular municipal elections held in the City, registered voter turnout in District 2 has varied from a low of 2.1 percent in an uncontested Council member and mayoral election (2011) to a high of 31 percent in a contested Councilmember (but uncontested mayoral) election (1991). Similarly, registered voter turnout in District 1 has varied from a low of 8.5 percent in an uncontested Councilmember and mayoral election (2001) to a high of 35.6 percent in a contested Councilmember (but uncontested mayoral) election (1995). Moreover, the same year that District 1 posted its lowest registered voter turnout levels (2001), registered voter turnout in a contested Councilmember election led to 30.7 percent of registered voters casting a ballot in District 3. The lowest level of registered voter turnout reported for District 3 over the

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<sup>20</sup> Id. (“This bill, commencing January 1, 2018, would prohibit a political subdivision, as defined, from holding an election other than on a statewide election date if holding an election on a nonconcurrent date has previously resulted in voter turnout for a regularly scheduled election in that political subdivision being at least 25% less than the average voter turnout within the political subdivision for the previous 4 statewide general elections, except as specified.”).

<sup>21</sup> See Thomas M. Holbrook and Aaron C. Weinschenk, “Campaigns, Mobilization, and Turnout in Mayoral Elections,” *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (2014).

<sup>22</sup> Id.

last fourteen elections, 7.7 percent in 1997, corresponded with an uncontested Councilmember and mayoral election in that district. That same year, 19.0 percent of registered voters in District 1 turned out to vote in a contested Councilmember election.

If changes to the length of terms of elected officials in College Park were to have some significant impact – positively or negatively – on the competitiveness of elections, this change would be reasonably anticipated to have a significant effect on registered voter turnout in the City. The primary source of data on this issue is the City of Rockville, which transitioned to four-year terms in time for its 2015 elections. Notwithstanding this charter change, voter turnout declined from nearly 17 percent in 2011 to just below 16 percent in 2015.<sup>23</sup> Rockville has responded by transitioning to a vote-by-mail system in pursuit of greater voter participation for its November 2019 elections.<sup>24</sup>

## **B. Registered Voter Turnout in Cities with Differing Election Systems**

Other municipalities have considered changes in term length as a means of increasing registered voter turnout in local elections. In 2018 the City of Springfield, Massachusetts requested that the state legislature approve a binding ballot question that would extend Councilmembers' terms from two to four years to improve voter turnout.<sup>25</sup> In 2016, Laurel, Maryland's City Council

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<sup>23</sup> See City of Rockville, "Certification of Election Results – Election of November 3, 2015" (Nov. 10, 2015), available at: <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13393/2015-Certified-Election-Results?bidId=> (reporting voter turnout of 15.87%) and City of Rockville, "Certification of Election Results – Election of November 8, 2011" (Nov. 14, 2011), available at <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5742/Election-Results-2011?bidId=> (reporting voter turnout of 16.94%).

<sup>24</sup> See City of Rockville, "Vote by Mail FAQ," available at: <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/34882/Vote-By-Mail-FAQ> ("Our goal is to make it easier for everyone to vote by getting ballots to you rather than having you come to the ballot.").

<sup>25</sup> See The Republican, "Springfield City Council Seeks Binding Ballot Question on 4-year Terms for Future Elections," (Feb. 7, 2018) available at: <https://www.masslive.com/business-news/2018/02/springfield-city-council-seeks-binding-b.html> (The Mayor of Springfield serves a four-year term, while councilmembers serve two year terms. Registered voter turnout in the city is significantly lower in non-mayoral election years, falling to 9.9 percent in 2017). Similarly, Boston's city council voted in 2016 to extend their terms from two to four years to make the terms concomitant with the mayor's four years in order to "do[] away with low turnout mid-term elections for councilors and rolling all municipal elections into a quadrennial exercise." Garrett Quinn, "Boston City Council Votes to Extend Terms to Four Years," Boston Magazine (Apr. 7, 2016) available at <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/2016/04/07/city-council-votes-to-extend-terms/>. In Boston, "when not held concurrently with a mayoral election, turnout

President, Ed Ricks, advocated for a change in Councilmembers' terms from two to four years on a similar basis.<sup>26</sup>

One way to measure the potential impact on registered voter turnout of any change to elected official term length would be to look at voter turnout in comparable cities in Maryland that have two-year or four-year terms for elected officials. This analysis may also be extended to encompass municipalities with four-year terms for elected officials where elections are staggered.

As discussed in detail below, historical voting information is readily available for one Maryland municipality with two-year mayoral and Council terms (Greenbelt), one Maryland municipality with four-year mayoral and Council terms that does not use a staggered election system (Annapolis), and one municipality with four-year mayoral and Council terms that utilizes a staggered election system (Hyattsville). As summarized below, registered voter turnout in these municipalities has significantly differed, with substantially more registered voters casting ballots in the municipality (Annapolis) with four-year mayoral and non-staggered Council terms. In Hyattsville, the largest number of votes cast over the last four regular municipal elections came during a non-mayoral election year, following expansions in the right to vote.

The nearby City of Greenbelt, Maryland has a population of 23,289 people (compared to 32,189 people in College Park) and the Mayor and Councilmembers are elected to two-year terms. All seats are at-large, with the Council choosing the Mayor, who is traditionally the Councilmember who receives the most votes.<sup>27</sup> The City of Greenbelt has published election results for the last three municipal elections on its website.<sup>28</sup> In 2013, 1,917 out of 13,113 registered voters cast a

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in a Boston city council election is typically less than half of what it is when a mayor is on the ballot too." James Sutherland and James Chisholm, "Four Arguments for Four-Year Boston City Council Terms," CommonWealth Magazine (Apr. 18, 2016), available at: <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/politics/four-arguments-for-four-year-boston-city-council-terms/>.

<sup>26</sup> See Andrew Michaels, "Laurel City Council Considers 4-year Terms, Shopping Cart Retrieval Fines," Laurel Leader (Apr. 8, 2016).

<sup>27</sup> See <https://www.greenbeltnmd.gov/government/city-council>.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.greenbeltnmd.gov/government/city-administration/city-clerk-s-office/election-information/election-results>.



ballot in Greenbelt's municipal election (14.6 percent). In 2015, 2,039 out of 13,156 registered voters cast a ballot in Greenbelt's municipal election (15.5 percent). And in 2017, 2,569 out of 13,597 registered voters cast a ballot in Greenbelt's municipal election (18.9 percent).

The City of Annapolis, Maryland has a population of 40,222 people and the Mayor and Councilmembers are elected to four-year terms. Elections are not staggered. The City of Annapolis has published voter turnout figures for the last four municipal elections on its website.<sup>29</sup> In 2005, 7,893 out of 23,464 registered voters cast a ballot in Annapolis' municipal election (33.6 percent). In 2009, 8,192 out of 23,013 registered voters cast a ballot in Annapolis' municipal election (35.6 percent). In 2013, 7,897 out of 23,519 registered voters cast a ballot in Annapolis' municipal election (33.6 percent). In 2017, the last unofficial voter turnout figures published by the city reported that 8,473 out of 25,623 registered voters cast a ballot in Annapolis' municipal election (33.1 percent).

The City of Hyattsville, Maryland has a population of 18,225 people, with the Mayor and Council elected to four-year terms, but with Councilmembers up for election on a staggered basis whereby one Council seat from each of the City's five wards is up for election every two years. The City of Hyattsville has published on its website voter turnout figures for its last municipal election, held in 2017.<sup>30</sup> With the Mayor not up for election in 2017, 1,575 out of 10,583 registered voters cast a ballot in Hyattsville's municipal election (14.9 percent).<sup>31</sup> This total represented a substantial increase from reported total voting levels in the 2015 election (1,190 votes), the 2013 election (943),<sup>32</sup> and the 2011 election (953 votes).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.annapolis.gov/420/Elections>.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.hyattsville.org/762/2017-Election-Results>.

<sup>31</sup> Id. Inequities in voting participation across districts continued, however, with 2017 voting results ranging from a high of 24 percent in Hyattsville's Ward 1 to a low of eight percent in Hyattsville's Ward 4. See id.

<sup>32</sup> See Rebecca Bennett, "Ward and Warner Election Winners; City Exceeds Voter Turnout Goal," Hyattsville Life & Times (May 6, 2015), available at: <http://hyattsvillelife.com/ward-and-warner-election-winners-city-exceeds-voter-turnout-goal/>.

<sup>33</sup> See City of Hyattsville Official Election, 2011 City Election, available at: <http://www.hyattsville.org/DocumentCenter/View/1054/Certified-Results-May-2011?bidId=>.

The increases in total votes in the 2015 and 2017 elections followed decisions by the City of Hyattsville to (1) expand the right to vote in their elections to citizens that are 16 years of age and over in January 2015; and (2) to expand the right to vote to all non-citizens that are 16 years of age and over in December 2016.<sup>34</sup> The City Clerk of Hyattsville reported that one-quarter of all registered 16- and 17-year old voters cast ballots in the 2015 election.<sup>35</sup> In the most recent election in May 2019, Hyattsville's voter participation slipped slightly despite a contested mayoral election and inclusion of non-resident voters.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Shani Warner, Hyattsville City Council Member, Ward 2, "FAQs" available at: <http://www.votewarner.com/faqs>.

<sup>35</sup> See Rebecca Bennett, "Ward and Warner Election Winners; City Exceeds Voter Turnout Goal," Hyattsville Life & Times (May 6, 2015), available at: <http://hyattsvillelife.com/ward-and-warner-election-winners-city-exceeds-voter-turnout-goal/>.

<sup>36</sup> The City of Hyattsville has not yet published voter turnout numbers for its May 7, 2019 election, but has reported that 1,549 votes were cast in the Mayoral election. See [http://www.hyattsville.org/DocumentCenter/View/5038/Certified-Return-Sheet\\_2019](http://www.hyattsville.org/DocumentCenter/View/5038/Certified-Return-Sheet_2019).

## 2. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Throughout our process concerns were expressed regarding the student constituency of the City of College Park. Those concerns fall into three categories: student participation in civic affairs, the time commitment required for a potential student candidate, and student voter activity. We also compared the City of College Park to other cities in the Big 10 Conference.

Due to the nature of the City's district set-up, student voices are split as the University's campus is separated between three districts. North Campus is in District 4, while South Campus is in District 2 (with a small bit of South Campus being in District 3). The preponderance of College Park students live in District 2 and District 4, with a significant number also residing in District 3, and a few living in District 1. This makes it more difficult for students to speak with one voice.

Residents offered their own recommendations to improve student participation, including redistricting, dividing the districts into eight (as College Park was districted in the past), and adding a voting student representative to the City Council. While this is outside the scope of the Commission's charter, it was among the issues brought up by the public during our investigation.

On the specific question about the length of terms for the Mayor and Council, concern was raised that lengthening the term to four years could disadvantage University of Maryland students. Currently, an undergraduate student could run and serve on the City Council during their time at the University.

The City requires that: *"At the time of taking office, the Mayor and each member of the Council shall have attained the age of 18 years and must be a citizen of the United States and a current registered voter in the City so registered for at least one year immediately preceding the date of election."*

A change to four-year terms would leave a student three years of eligibility, meaning a four-year term would take them beyond their time as an undergraduate student. This could deter students from serving on the Council. Another possible result is that it would encourage students, who run and possibly win, to reside in College Park after they complete their studies at the University. It could also lead to the need for a special election, if the student won and then had to leave the City before their term expired.

The Commission contacted other cities in the Big 10 Conference on the issue. A Councilmember from West Lafayette, Indiana – the home of Purdue University – told us he was elected while still in school, and he serves to this day. When asked if a four-year term deters students from running, he told us that students continue to run and that the result of students running and being elected has more to do with greater political challenges (districts, voter turnout, etc.) and not term length. West Lafayette also has a district that is nearly all student-residents, which nearly ensures that a student serves on the Council, giving voice to their constituents. East Lansing, Michigan, which is home to Michigan State University, also saw a student successfully run and win in the 2017 election for a four-year term. In response to our inquiries, the City Clerk of Urbana, Illinois, which is home to the University of Illinois, informed us that he first ran for a city council seat in 1988 as a graduate student running against an undergraduate student. He ultimately spent 16 years on the City Council and was in his second year serving as the City Clerk. He did not recall many campaigns involving students since then in Urbana and explained that he believed the single biggest impediment to student involvement in municipal politics was the fact that elections were held in an April timeframe after federal and state elections in November.

Concern was also expressed that a four-year term might decrease student involvement in City affairs. It is possible that with students only having the opportunity to vote once every four years, they would feel disinclined to get involved in City elections or affairs as their vote would not directly affect them. With a two-year term, students would be able to keep their Councilmembers accountable to them and may feel more inclined to stay more involved throughout their time in college.

In addition to this, there are limitations to campaigning in dorms due to Department of Resident Life rules. Currently, a student who resides in a dorm can campaign in the dorm and collect signatures for their candidacy, but a non-student cannot collect signatures from their constituents in dorms due to restricted access. Nor can literature be distributed without the Resident Director's consent. This leads to unfairness, as students can access a specific part of a district that non-students cannot reach.

The chart below reflects other cities in the Big 10 Conference and their set-up for years in a term. Sixteen out of the 18 cities we looked at had four-year terms, with College Park, Maryland, and

Madison, Wisconsin having two-year terms. Ann Arbor, Michigan changed their terms from two years to four years in 2017, and Columbus, Ohio changed its term lengths in 2018.

University	City	Population <sup>37</sup>	Term Length	Election Date	Length Switch
Ohio State University	Columbus, OH	787,033	4 years	Nov. 2019 / 4 Years	Yes <sup>38</sup>
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	Minneapolis, MN	382,578	4 years	Nov. 2019 / 4 Years	
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	St. Paul, MN	285,068	4 years	Nov. 2019 / 4 Years <sup>39</sup>	
University of Nebraska – Lincoln	Lincoln, NE	258,379	4 years	Nov. 2019 / 4 Years	
University of Wisconsin – Madison	Madison, WI	233,209	2 years	Apr. 2019 / 2 Years <sup>40</sup>	
University of Michigan	Ann Arbor, MI	113,934	4 years	Nov. 2018 / 4 Years	Yes <sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Population data from U.S. Census Bureau for 2010, available at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045218>

<sup>38</sup> Columbus, OH used to operate a system by which the three winning candidates who received the least amount of votes served terms of two years. In May 2018, voters passed Issue 3, creating a nine-district city council that will take effect in 2023, “with the city clerk drawing straws to determine which members will serve four-year terms and which will serve two-year terms to maintain staggered terms.” Jim Letizia, “Columbus Voters Approve Measure Expanding Size of City Council,” *90.5 WCBE.ORG* (May 9, 2018), available at: <https://www.wcbe.org/post/columbus-voters-approve-measure-expanding-size-city-council>

<sup>39</sup> In St. Paul, MN terms for both council members and the Mayor are four years. However, the terms for council members and the Mayor are not concurrent. In November 2019, citizens of St. Paul will vote for council members, but not for mayor. In November 2021, citizens of St. Paul will vote for mayor, but not council members. *See* Ramsey County Election Results, <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/elections-voting/voters/election-results>.

<sup>40</sup> In Madison, WI, alders elected to the Common Council serve two year terms. *See* <https://www.cityofmadison.com/Council/councilMembers/runForCouncil.cfm>. The Mayor of Madison, WI is elected to a four year term, with the most recent election for Mayor held in April 2019. *See* [https://ballotpedia.org/Mayoral\\_election\\_in\\_Madison,\\_Wisconsin\\_\(2019\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Mayoral_election_in_Madison,_Wisconsin_(2019)).

<sup>41</sup> In 2016, the Ann Arbor City Council switched their term lengths from two years to four years, starting with the 2018 election. *See* Brian Kuang, “Ballot Proposal for City Council Term Extension Passes,” *Michigan Daily* (Nov. 9, 2016), available at: <https://www.michigandaily.com/section/ann-arbor/ballot-proposal-city-council-term-extension-passes>. The change did not appear to lead to students running for a city council position, nor did students appear to have run prior to the switch. *See* Ann Arbor Votes, “Who’s Running for Ann Arbor Mayor and City Council,” available at: <http://annarborvotes.org/ann-arbor-mayor-and-city-council-nov-2018>; and Jackie Charniga, “Mayor and Five Councilmembers to Run For Re-Election While Newcomers Surface,” *Michigan Daily* (Feb. 25, 2016), available at:

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Champaign, IL	81,055	4 years	Apr. 2019 / Staggered Every 2 Years	
Indiana University	Bloomington, IN	80,405	4 years	Nov. 2019 / 4 Years	
Northwestern University	Evanston, IL	74,486	4 years	Nov. 2019 / 4 Years	
University of Iowa	Iowa City, IA	67,862	4 Years	Nov. 2019 / Staggered Every 2 Years <sup>42</sup>	
Rutgers University – New Brunswick	Piscataway, NJ	56,044	4 years	Nov. 2019 / Staggered Every 2 Years	
Rutgers University – New Brunswick	New Brunswick, NJ	55,181	4 years	Nov. 2018 / Staggered Every 2 Years <sup>43</sup>	
Michigan State University	East Lansing, MI	48,579	4 years	Nov. 2019 / 4 Years	
Penn State University	Borough of State College, PA	42,034	4 years	Nov. 2019 / 4 Years	
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Urbana, IL	41,250	4 years	Apr. 2017 / 4 Years	
<b>University of Maryland, College Park</b>	<b>College Park, MD</b>	<b>30,413</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>Nov. 2019 / 2 Years</b>	
Purdue University	West Lafayette, IN	29,596	4 years	Nov. 2019 / 4 Years	
Penn State University	College Township, PA	9,521	4 years	Nov. 2019 / Staggered	

<https://www.michigandaily.com/section/news/eight-contenders-emerge-upcoming-city-council-and-mayoral-elections>

<sup>42</sup> Council member term lengths are four years in Iowa City, with staggered elections. See, e.g., [https://www.johnson-county.com/dept\\_auditor\\_elections.aspx?id=22643](https://www.johnson-county.com/dept_auditor_elections.aspx?id=22643) and <https://www.johnson-county.com/auditor/returns/2017CityElectionTurnout.htm>. At the same time, the Mayor of Iowa City is elected by the council every two years. See, e.g., <https://www.icgov.org/person/jim-throgmorton>. Thus, in Iowa City's staggered election system, no issue is presented regarding the Mayor being on the ballot in alternating elections.

<sup>43</sup> In New Brunswick, NJ, elections alternate between those for the mayor and two council members (last held in November 2018) and for three council members (last held in November 2016). See <https://mcgisweb.co.middlesex.nj.us/elections/>.

				Every 2 Years	
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### 3. ACCOUNTABILITY

In a representative democracy, the principle of accountability holds that government officials - whether elected or appointed by those who have been elected - are responsive and responsible to the citizenry for their decisions and actions. In order that officials may be held accountable, the principle of transparency requires that the decisions and actions of those in government are open to public scrutiny and the public has a right to access government information.

Together, accountability and transparency are central to the idea of democratic governance, and in their absence, democracy is impossible. In the absence of accountability and transparency, voters are necessarily ignorant in their electoral choices; elections and the notion of the will of the people lose their meaning and government has the potential to become arbitrary and self-serving.<sup>44</sup>

It is in this context that many City residents reported to the Commission that increasing the term of office of College Park Mayor and Council from two years to four years reduces democracy, in that: it reduces the power of the individuals to meet potential candidates; reduces their power to vote in elections; and reduces the ability of citizens to influence the decision-making processes of their City government. City government is perceived to be the type of government closest to the people, and responsiveness to local constituents is considered a particular value of municipal government.

Several commenters stated that it is important to keep two-year Council terms in order to ensure that our elected representatives remain “closer to the people,” and to minimize the chance that local community needs and concerns might become secondary to other interests or priorities of the Mayor or Council. In this vein, other commenters stated, “We need new councilmembers actively and immediately questioning outdated and ineffective ways of doing things” and “I do not believe that the term is too short to allow for a learning curve and subsequent execution of the duties of office.” On the other hand, those favoring four-year terms generally voiced their support in terms of “moving big projects forward” and not focusing on re-election every other year.

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<sup>44</sup> Democracy Web, accessed March 27, 2019 at: <http://www.democracyweb.org/accountability-principles>.



One commenter recounted public statements of a former Councilmember that door knocking during the campaign was when she most heard from constituents. The former Councilmember further remarked that elections every two years kept the Council more attuned to their constituents.

Several commenters expressed doubt that lengthening the term of office to four years and thereby ensuring greater continuity in elected office was of value. Rather, several commenters stated that two-year terms are long enough to permit the Council to complete significant projects or priorities. Others noted that potential candidates for Mayor and Council might be disinclined to run when a four-year commitment was required. Thus, a change to four-year terms could reduce the candidate pool and also reduce the shared perspective and receptivity that ties an elected official to their community's residents, and vice versa.

The issue of staggered terms was not felt to impact responsive government if two-year terms for Mayor and Council were retained. However, several commenters noted that a change to four-year terms should be accompanied by the addition of recall provisions to the City Charter to ensure responsiveness. Other commenters noted that a change to staggered terms would still require elections every two years; that any reduction in costs to the City for holding elections for half of the Council would be minimal; and that any efficiency gained by onboarding fewer new Councilmembers would be minimal.

#### **4. RECALL PROVISION**

Although the Commission was not charged with considering the merits of recall elections, due to the number of constituents who raised the issue during the public forums, the Commission agreed that information on recall elections should be submitted to the City Council and the Mayor. College Park does not currently have a recall provision.

The majority of residents expressed opposition to amending the City's charter to extend terms, voicing concerns that such an extension would limit democracy and the voice of residents. Residents feared that if they are unhappy with their elected representative, they would be "stuck" with them for an excessively long time. There seemed to be a view however, that if the terms on the City Council were extended, residents should have the opportunity to recall any official with whom they are dissatisfied with for any reason. For many, this would buttress the democratic process and allow them to retain some sort of power.

Ms. Mary Cook stated on March 11<sup>th</sup> at the Davis Hall public forum:

I think everyone up here knows what I think. That our elected officials should be elected every two years. The reason I'm getting up tonight is to point out that if this should go through, if the Council decides to change our current code to four years that we should have the right to recall.

After some research, the Commission found other cities that have four-year council terms which also have recall provisions, including Bowie, Rockville and Takoma Park. The recall terms differ for each city. Bowie allows a recall if "twenty-five percent (25 percent) of the registered voters, within the district of the affected Councilmember or within the City for Councilmembers elected at large or the mayor, have signed the petition within thirty (30) days of its filing." A recall election is triggered in Rockville if a petition has at least "thirty percent (30 percent) of the average number of ballots cast in the last three City elections." In Takoma Park there are different standards for recall petitions against the Mayor and those against Councilmembers. For the mayor, a petition must have "at least 1,500 qualified voters of the City of Takoma Park or at least 20 percent of the qualified voters of the City, whichever is greater." For a councilmember a petition must have "the signatures of at least 100 qualified voters of the ward the councilmember represents or at least 20 percent of the qualified voters of that ward, whichever is greater."

In 2017, Bowie residents successfully recalled District 2 Councilmember Diane Polangin. In 2018, Bowie residents unsuccessfully attempted to recall Councilmember Courtney Glass.

The City of College Park has unique challenges in creating a practical recall provision that do not exist in Rockville, Bowie or Takoma Park, including but not limited to restrictions on collecting signatures on University of Maryland's campus. The creation of a recall provision should involve considerable community input.

## 5. CONTINUITY

This section of the report focuses on the issue of continuity as addressed by public testimony:

- Are two years enough to complete projects?
- Can elected officials enter into long-term development plans for the city?
- Does a two-year term create disruption to the business of running the City?

We note that the majority of public testimony presented advocated against extending the present two-year term limit to four years for Mayor and Councilmembers. In contrast to arguments emphasizing increased continuity, commenters expressed concern that a four-year term would create a government that is less accountable to the voters whom they represent.

The arguments made for or against extending term-limits were not very different from those of other jurisdictions that have faced the same question.

In terms of continuity, City residents expressed the view that a four-year term limit shows the long-term commitment of the candidate and that it allows an elected official to make decisions based on policy rather than on concerns for the next campaign. A four-year term allows involvement in longer-term projects without interruptions of transfer of power. It creates a more collegial body when the Councilmembers know they will be working together for a period of four years.

Other testimony presented maintained that a two-year term does not impede continuity and the example given by some residents was that of College Park Councilmember Monroe Dennis and other former Councilmembers such as Jack Perry who served for many years. Others stated that besides the political career-starting opportunity a two-year term provides, most incumbents generally win re-election should they choose to run again, effectively providing for long-term continuity. After addressing continuity, residents were primarily concerned with accountability, maintaining that in our present two-year term, Mayor and Councilmembers will have more frequent communication with the voters based on the need to campaign every two years, thus, creating a more responsible government accountable to the voting population.

Some residents further stated that a four-year term commitment is likely to discourage potential candidates from running, particularly University of Maryland students. If terms were extended,

commenters expressed the belief that the substantial student population would go under-represented and, as such, this change would impede students' ability to influence City affairs.

Still other residents argued in favor of a four-year term explaining that there is a learning curve for newly elected officials which takes a while; it takes a new member at least a year to come up to full speed on City affairs; and the second year they spend time thinking about re-election. Commenters argued that two-year terms are disruptive to Council business because the Mayor and Councilmembers spend more time campaigning for re-election. Others stated that a two-year term is not conducive to the maintenance of institutional memory and that a two-year term is too short to legislate and manage the short and long-term interests of the community as a whole.

In terms of continuity, strong arguments were made in favor of a four-year term but the overall weight of testimony provided to the Charter Review Commission was against extending the present two-year term to a four-year term. One can conclude that continuity is not the number one concern for voters in the City of College Park. Accountability is. The perception is that a four-year term does not equal accountability and responsible government.

In reviewing the systems maintained by other jurisdictions, we note that four-year terms for city elected officials is not uncommon. According to the National League of Cities, "the most common (roughly 50 percent of localities) mayoral and councilor term length is four years. When adding municipalities that have mayoral/councilor terms of two years, that covers approximately 80 percent of cities and towns."<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, four-year terms for council members and mayors are the overwhelming convention for larger municipalities:

"In large American cities like Boston, the four-year city council term is the norm, not the exception. Of the 33 cities with more than 500,000 residents as of the 2010 US Census, only five of them currently utilize a two-year council term (Boston, Charlotte, Dallas, Fort Worth, and San Antonio). The four-year term is touted by groups like the National Civic League – a nonpartisan nonprofit organization founded by municipal reformers over a century ago to fight the ills associated with urban political machines."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See <https://www.nlc.org/resource/cities-101-term-lenghts-and-limits>.

<sup>46</sup> James Sutherland and James Chisholm, "Four Arguments for Four-Year Boston City Council Terms," *CommonWealth Magazine* (Apr. 18, 2016), available at: <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/politics/four-arguments-for-four-year-boston-city-council-terms/>.

The prevalence of four-year terms is also apparent in Maryland in municipal jurisdictions comparable to College Park. The table below summarizes elected official term lengths of 29 different municipalities in Maryland with populations of at least 7,000 residents. Of these 29 municipalities, just nine have two-year terms for both city councilmembers and mayor. In contrast, 16 have four-year terms for both city councilmembers and their mayor. Three of the remaining four municipalities have two-year terms for mayors and four-year terms for councilmembers, while the final municipality has a four-year term for its mayor and two-year terms for its councilmembers:

MUNICIPALITY	COUNTY	POPULATION	TRM-MAYOR	TRM-COUNCIL	STAGGERED?
<i>College Park</i>	<i>Prince George's</i>	<i>32,189</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>No</i>
<b>Mid-Sized Cities (20,000 to 41,000 population)</b>					
Hagerstown	Washington	40,222	4	4	No
Annapolis	Anne Arundel	39,151	4	4	No
Salisbury	Wicomico	32,368	4	4S	Yes
Laurel	Prince George's	25,913	4	2	No
Greenbelt	Prince George's	23,289	2	2	No
Cumberland	Allegany	20,084	2	4S	Yes
<b>Large Cities (&gt; 41,000 population)</b>					
Baltimore		619,796	4	4	No
Frederick	Frederick	69,330	4	4	No
Gaithersburg	Montgomery	67,417	4	4S	Yes
Rockville	Montgomery	66,420	4	4	No
Bowie	Prince George's	58,290	4	4	No
<b>Small-Sized Cities (7,000 to 20,000 population)</b>					
Westminster	Carroll	18,557	4	4S	Yes
Hyattsville	Prince George's	18,225	4	4S	Yes
Takoma Park	Montgomery	17,643	2	2	No
Easton	Talbot	16,606	4	4S	Yes
Elkton	Cecil	15,651	4	4S	Yes
Aberdeen	Harford	15,523	4	4	No
Havre de Grace	Harford	13,511	2	2S	Yes
New Carrollton	Prince George's	12,932	2	2S	Yes
Cambridge	Dorchester	12,484	4	4	No
Chevy Chase, Town of	Montgomery	9,844	2	2S	Yes
Mount Airy	Carroll	9,387	4	4S	Yes
Bladensburg	Prince George's	9,374	2	4S	Yes
La Plata	Charles	9,160	4	4S	Yes
Frostburg	Allegany	8,689	2	2	No
Mount Rainier	Prince George's	8,097	2	2S	Yes
Riverdale Park	Prince George's	7,248	2	2	No
Ocean City	Worcester	7,026	2	4S	Yes

Eleven of the 19 municipalities with four-year councilmember terms employ staggered elections.

Finally, we note that although a number of municipalities with two-year terms for councilmembers and/or mayors have considered extending terms to four-years over the last several years,<sup>47</sup> other municipalities have moved in the other direction. In 2018, for example, residents in the City of Cincinnati overwhelmingly voted in favor of a charter amendment that reduced term lengths for Cincinnati City Councilmembers to two years from four years.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See, e.g., Gordon Vincent, “Pros and Cons of Four-Year Election Terms Are Debated” *Woburn Daily Times* (Mar. 12, 2014) (Woburn, Massachusetts); Joe Killian, “Greensboro Voters Will Decide on Four-Year Terms for Council” *Greensboro News & Record* (Nov. 1, 2015) (Greensboro, North Carolina); Brian Kuang, “Ballot Proposal for City Council Term Extension Passes” *Michigan Daily* (Nov. 9, 2016) (Ann Arbor, Michigan); Editorial Board, “Two-Year Terms Are Too Short for Mayors and Other Politicians” *The Tribune* (Jan. 19, 2018) (San Luis Obispo, California); Ben Conley, “Term Lengths Charter Change Stalls in City Council” *The Dominion Post* (Mar. 21, 2018) (Morgantown, West Virginia); Zach Gottehrer-Cohen, “Staggered, Limited, Longer Terms Considered for Charter” *Long Island Herald* (Mar. 29, 2018) (Glenn Cove, New York); James Day, “Corvallis City Charter Review Process Moves Forward” *Corvallis Gazette-Times* (June 18, 2018) (Corvallis, Idaho); Michael Barrett, “Gastonia Mayor Wants Return to a Four-Year Term” *Gaston Gazette* (Aug. 21, 2018) (Gastonia, North Carolina); Justin Dennis, “Canfield Voters Can Choose Longer Terms for Council” *The Vindicator* (Oct. 11, 2018) (Canfield, Ohio); Lisa Kashinsky, “Committee Proposes Changes to Methuen Charter” *Eagle Tribune* (Nov. 26, 2018) (Methuen, Massachusetts); and Erin Keever, “Charlotte Talks: Should Charlotte’s City Council Move from Two-Year to Four-Year Terms?” *WFAE.org* (Nov. 27, 2018) (Charlotte, North Carolina).

<sup>48</sup> See Max Londberg, “Cincinnati City Council charter amendments: Which ones passed?” *Cincinnati Enquirer* (Nov. 6, 2018) available at <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2018/11/06/cincinnati-city-council-charter-amendments-which-ones-passed/1910838002/>.

## **6. ELECTION COSTS AND A CONSIDERATION OF STAGGERED TERMS**

As stewards of the citizen's tax dollars, one of the factors the Council needs to consider, when undertaking a policy change, is its cost. Elections are not free to the City. Voting machines have to be rented, the polls have to be staffed and other expenses paid.

In the past election, costs were minimal when the City used paper ballots that were hand counted at the end of the night. Election costs ran from just under \$6,000 in FY 2010 (the 2009 election) to a high of just under \$8,000 in FY 2014 (the 2013 election). Election costs increased substantially with the 2015 election as the City made the transition to voting machines. In 2015, the City rented DS200 ballot scanners and an Express Vote ballot marking device for each poll.

The new devices caused election costs to jump to just under \$23,600 in FY 2016. For the 2017 election, ePoll books were added at each poll, raising the costs to just over \$28,000 for FY 2018. This cost will go up in 2020 as the College Park will open a new polling location in the University of Maryland campus and is adding Early Voting.

A four-year term will cost the City about half what it will cost College Park to run an election every two years, assuming the City has the same number of polling places and continues to pay the election chief and undertake the same expenditures. This savings disappears if council elections are staggered as an election will still take place every two years, and it costs the same to run an election whether one person or 10 people are up for election at the same time. An increase from a two- to a four-year term could increase the likelihood of a special election to fill seats of those who resign before the end of their terms. These special elections would affect the cost to the City.

The cost of on-boarding new City Councilmembers and a new Mayor also need to be considered. This cost is hard to figure as it is different for each new member, but City employees do have to teach new Councilmembers how College Park operates and some of the ins-and-outs of processes like budgeting. This takes time and there is an associated cost with that process.

While cost is a major concern for the City government, there are some issues that defy quantification. Of the comments we've received addressing staggered terms, about a half-dozen told the Commission that they would like to see the terms staggered, if the council went to four-year terms. A couple of commenters opposed staggered terms outright.



Most of the commentary in support of staggered terms generally claims that it provides for continuity and a smoother transition for new members joining Council or becoming Mayor. Two commenters said they opposed staggered terms citing costs.

While it wasn't mentioned by the commenters, the academic and popular literature finds that a staggered term builds in a resistance to change because the Council can only be replaced piecemeal. A desire to enact wholesale change – to “throw the bums out” – can be thwarted as only a portion of the body can be replaced at one time. Election of the Council all at once makes it easier to put together a “slate” of candidates who are allied to affect change.

Members of the Commission voiced concern that a staggered term Council could allow a Councilmember to retain his seat while running for Mayor. If the Mayor is up for election every four years in a staggered-term Council, then a Councilmember who is not up for election could run for Mayor, and if they lose the mayoral election would still remain on the Council. If the Councilmember won, that would increase the cost of elections and add another election to the calendar.

It's an interesting question that the Council could address if it takes up the electoral change. The Council could decide to enact a provision that requires a Councilmember to give up his seat to run for Mayor; choose not to worry about the issue; or make some other decision.

Another member of the Commission also raised the question about staggered terms regarding the Mayor. Since the Mayor would run once every four years that would leave one election cycle without the “head” of the ticket. In general, a mayoral race usually draws more attention and attracts more voters to the polls. However, as we point out in another section of the report, the presidential election is the real driver for electoral participation in city elections in general, with turnout spiking in those years.

Once again, an interesting question, that is somewhat out of the scope of the Commission. The Council could decide to have the Mayor run every two years while the Councilmember run every four on staggered terms. This would, however, do away with many of the advantages inherent in a four-year term and put mayoral candidates in the disadvantageous position of having to run twice as often as a Councilmember. This question is moot if the Mayor and Council are all elected at the same time.

## **7. FREQUENCY OF CAMPAIGNS FROM THE CANDIDATES' PERSPECTIVE**

Several of the factors raised concerning the appropriate term length of Council terms have to do with candidacy, fundraising and constituent connection. Would candidates be more or less likely to run if it were a four-year term? If there were fewer election cycles, would candidates have to raise less money? If candidates only campaigned once every four years, would there be less of a connection and conversation with constituents and therefore less accountability? Questions were also raised about incumbency and competitive elections: How many Councilmembers run for re-election? How many are defeated?

### **A. Would candidates be more or less likely to run if the term was four years?**

Each of the last three elections have seen an increase in candidates running for office. The 2017 election saw at least four candidates for each Council district and four people running for Mayor. In 2015, all but one of the Council districts was contested, with four people running in each of three districts and two running for Mayor. In 2013, two districts only had two candidates, while the other two had three candidates, with two candidates for Mayor. 2011 looked exactly the same as 2013, except that the only mayoral candidate was unopposed.

It is hard to provide hard data on whether changing to a four-year term would attract more people to run for office. It is a lot easier to know whether or not those who have served on the Council would have run for office if it was a four-year term.

In an anonymous survey of a dozen former and current Councilmembers, 10 said they would have run if it was a four-year term. The other two Councilmember/former Councilmembers stated that they weren't sure if they would have sought election. A longer term would have made it a more difficult decision to run and they were looking forward to serving and using the first term to assess whether they would run again.

One line of thought is that more people would be likely to run if they had to campaign every four years instead of every two. Another line of thought is that fewer people would run if it were a four-year term because it would be more difficult to commit to a four-year term.

One current/former Councilmember commented that a shorter term makes it harder on those with full time jobs. Campaigning every two years (and fundraising) takes time and energy away from other priorities. In an ideal world, Councilmembers spend time learning about the issues impacting the City and its residents, communicating regularly with constituents, doing long term visioning and planning, all while carrying out the policy-making decisions of a Councilmember. In reality, this current/former Councilmember commented, it's hard to do all these things well all the time, and during campaign season other aspects of the work do not get as much attention as one would like.

A change in terms to four years could make it harder for undergraduate or graduate students to participate as candidates. Most undergraduates spend four years at the university. According to City law, candidates need to live in the jurisdiction for at least a year before they can run for Council or Mayor. That would leave three years for a student to be eligible to run for office, meaning, a four-year term would take them beyond their time as an undergraduate student. While winning an election could be a motivating factor for a student to stay in College Park after graduation, it could also serve as a deterrent for undergraduates who would be unwilling to commit during a time of transition. It could also lead to resignations if a Councilmember graduates and takes a job that moves them out of College Park.

#### **B. How much money is spent on elections, and how could this change?**

There seems to be little doubt that less money overall would be raised and spent by candidates if elections were held less often. One cannot assume that having an election twice as often would translate to twice as much money being raised and spent by candidates. The number of candidates and whether the election was contested will affect the amount of money raised and spent by candidates in the race. If an election was held every four years, there might be a stronger sense of urgency to raise more money in order to support or defeat a candidate, therefore driving up the amount of spending per election, but still driving down the overall amount of money spent every four years.

For example, Candidate A might spend \$750 on an election if the elections were every two years, but might raise \$1000 an election if the elections were every four years. While they would be spending \$250 more *per election*, every four years they would be spending \$500 less because the election happens every four years instead of every two. It is also important to note that the costs

of elections, in terms of how much candidates raise and spend, has been on an upward trajectory in national, state and local elections.

Based on public information, the average candidate for Council in 2017 spent \$1,114 during the election cycle. This went from a low of \$0 to a high of \$2,495. The average mayoral candidate spent \$8,583, with the lowest being \$1,334 and the highest being \$12,523.<sup>49</sup>

The 2015 election cycle saw the average candidate for Council spend \$1,166 (from a low of \$34 and to a high of \$3,049) and the average mayoral candidate spend \$11,636 (with the two candidates spending \$15,161 and \$8,110).

**C. If candidates only campaigned once every four years, would there be less connection and conversation with constituents and therefore less accountability?**

In our survey of current and former Councilmembers we tried to gauge how much constituent interaction occurs during a campaign cycle, and how much occurs during the time between elections.

In terms of quantity, nine of those surveyed said that the amount of time they spent interacting with constituents, especially going door to door, was significantly higher during a campaign cycle. Most said that, when it came to door to door voter connection, they did little of it outside of a campaign. One current/former Councilmember told us that election season and going door-to-door was the only time they got to talk to folks on a one-on-one basis.

Three current/former Councilmembers shared that the time spent was about the same, but it was of a different nature. For instance, one mentioned that they talked to more people during campaign season, but they were short conversations and focused more on why they should be elected/re-elected. Another shared that they still met with more constituents during campaign season, but it was primarily through different meetings and events. And another mentioned that they spent the same amount of time with people, however when it wasn't campaigning it would

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<sup>49</sup> These numbers only reflect the numbers reported on each candidates' final campaign report. Several candidates did not file final reports (or, they did not appear on the city's website), and therefore those statistics are not included.

be more focused on working with one or more constituents to help address specific issues (which might involve hours of conversations, meetings, etc.).

Several current/former Councilmembers commented that they saw a direct correlation between the amount of time spent campaigning and policy making. While they spent more time campaigning in the election season, they spent that much less time policy making in the City. They saw it as a direct trade-off which could raise an important question about time and values: Do we value a stronger connection with constituents and accountability, or do we value more amount of time spent on policy making?

However, one current/former Councilmember commented that, in their view, four-year terms were better for constituents and the city. They mentioned that a typical first term involves a lot of learning (and there is never a shortage of things to learn, whether its directly city related, or about the history, the budget, the way the city and county related to one another, the dynamics and relationships, etc.). This person shared that, in an effort to best serve the City and constituents, they continued to spend much of their first year learning as much as they could. This takes away from time that would be spent in other ways. Ideally, a second year would be spent more with constituents, they said, and crafting individual policy. With campaigning beginning halfway through the year, policymaking and long-term vision and planning take a hit, they said. With a strong investment from the City into orienting and teaching new Councilmembers, they argued that it behooves the City and all constituents to give those Councilmembers a chance to use their knowledge for the betterment of College Park.

Those surveyed mentioned that they had forms of conversation with constituents, including at council meetings or when doing their duties on other City committees and commissions; through email and other correspondence; blogs, newsletters; and at community events like farmer's markets.

**D. Do Councilmembers run for multiple terms, and if so, how often do they win?**

One of the frequent questions raised in this conversation is the importance of continuity. Several commented that they find it important to have Councilmembers who serve longer so they can better pursue long-range policies and planning, and so that there is less training needed for

incoming candidates. Others sought the ability to vote out a Councilmember who is deemed unresponsive or unacceptable to their constituents.

While longer terms could create more continuity, the reality is that, in the history of College Park elections (37 election cycles total for over 333 specific positions), only 14 incumbents have lost a re-election bid for City Council,<sup>50</sup> with only one Mayor losing a re-election bid. Several of those defeated candidates ran again during subsequent elections, with many regaining their former seats.

Another factor to consider is whether Councilmembers and the Mayor would want to serve beyond two years. For some, two years could seem like a good trial period, with the opportunity to decline to run again if they found the job was not what they expected or were prepared for.

While the number of candidates in each cycle has increased over the last four elections (including in 2017 where every office was contested by at least twice as many candidates than seats available), it is still hard to know whether there would be more or fewer candidates if the terms were moved to four years.

Four-year terms would likely lead to less overall spending per calendar year, but most likely would lead to an increased amount of spending per election cycle. The time spent campaigning per year would decrease, which would mean less time spent connecting with constituents at their doors. While the re-election rate of incumbent Council and mayoral candidates is high (and, therefore provides a good opportunity for Councilmembers to continue serving if they have the desire), longer terms could provide more consistency, but could also mean that people serving might still have the desire to serve or could result in an increase of resignations and special elections before the end of the term.

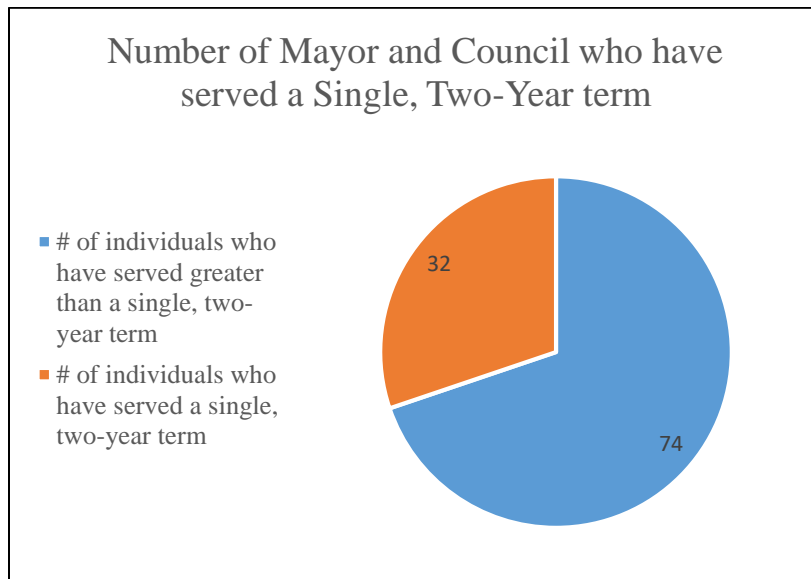
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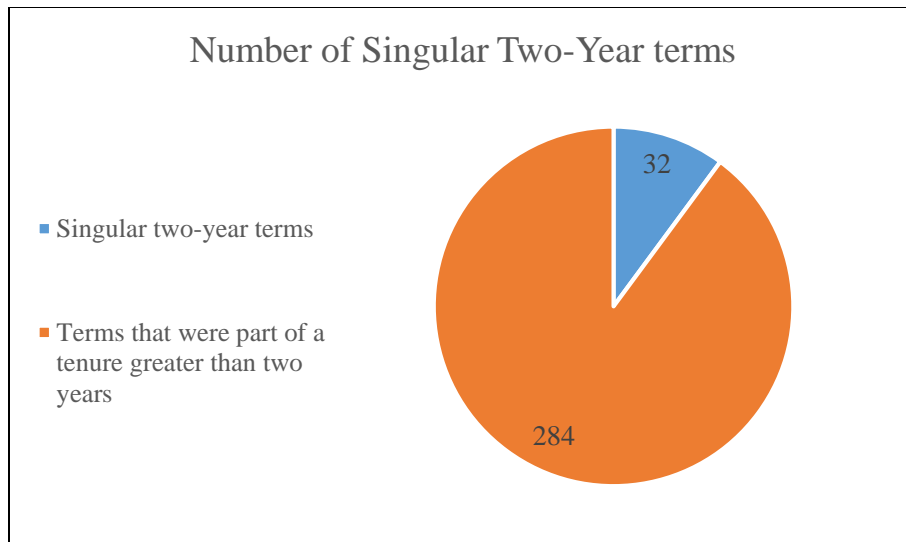
<sup>50</sup> This number does not include those who ran for a different seat (for instance, they were a Council member from district 4 and they ran for mayor or Council at large). It also does not include those incumbent Council members who lost their elections to those who had also formerly served on the Council.

## 8. COMMITMENT TO FOUR-YEAR TERM

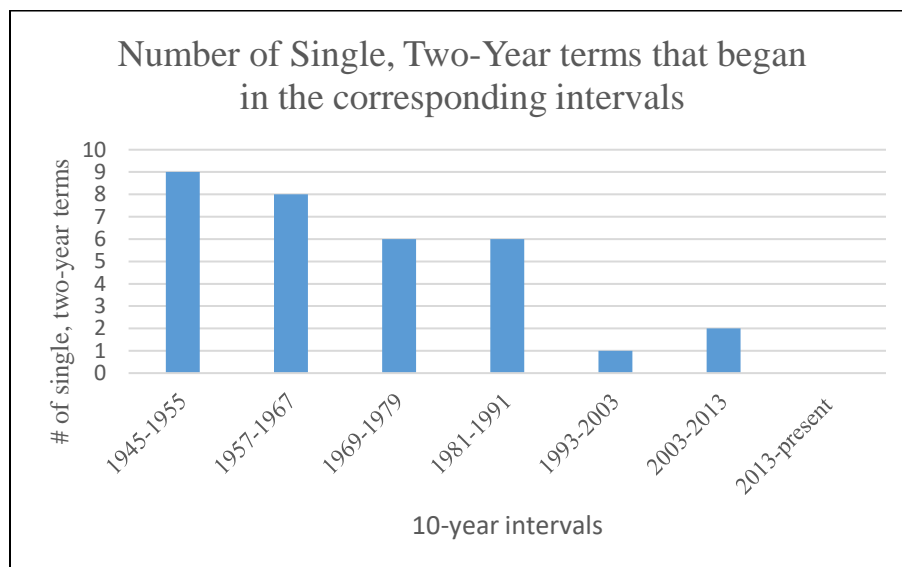
If the City was to change to a four-year term, would it deter candidacy? This question has been previously mentioned in this report and has been a major factor in the discussion of the Commission. This section focuses on this question by examining the frequency of singular, two-year terms served by Mayor and Council.

Of the 106 individuals who have served or are serving as Mayor and/or Council, 74 have served more than a single, two-year term and 32 have served a single, two-year term. Thus, 74 individuals have successfully sought re-election after their initial two-year term and served as Mayor or Council for more than two years. Looking at the data from another perspective, of the 316 total terms served by 106 individuals, 32 have been single, two-year terms. Current Councilmembers John Rigg and Catherine Kennedy are not included in the count, as they are serving their first term and it is not yet determined whether this term will classify as a single, two-year term.

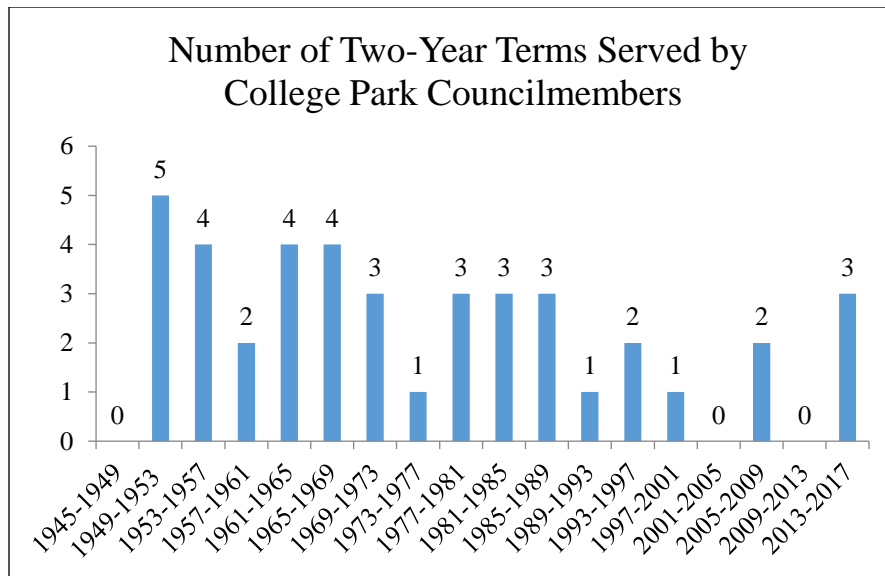




The majority of singular terms comes prior to 1997, with 19 occurring between 1949-1969 and 11 occurring from 1971-1997 with John Anders being the final Councilmember in this timeframe serving 1995-1997. Since 1997, two Councilmembers have served a single, two-year term (Jonathan Molinatto 2007-2009 and Alan Hew 2013-2015). It is important to note that some individuals served a single, two-year term twice and are not included in the count of 32. For example, former Councilmember Christine Nagle served 2009-2011 and 2015-2017. Similarly, former Councilmember Mary Cook served 2007-2009 and 2013-2015. Also, eight individuals included in the 32 single two-year terms sought re-election immediately after ending their term. For example, former Councilmember Robert Wilson served 1979-1981 and unsuccessfully sought re-election in 1981.







A member of the Commission highlighted the possibility that as the length of term increases, the probability of a special election increases due to Mayors and Councilmembers changing permanent residency and other factors. There have been public comment remarks that have expressed the opinion that City Council is introductory politics, therefore, Councilmembers should not be expected to commit four years, “City Council is freshmen politics. Basically, this is where people start their careers. Four-year terms will just scare off people because they can’t make a four-year commitment.”

Another public comment views a four-year commitment as a positive. A change to a four-year term could potentially increase comradery and productivity of the Mayor and Council, “There is a potential for the Council to vote more cohesively and to be more collegial if they know they are going to be working together for a four-year period”.

The statistics from the City’s history show that the majority of Mayors and Councilmembers serve, or desire to serve, more than a single two-year term.

## **Conclusion**

While our job was not to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council on the issue of changing the length and timing of their terms, we hope our examination can be something of a road map that may help guide the Council's decision to pursue a change or leave it be.

As the Commission executed its charge, a major underlying theme arose in the public debate over the length of the term of Councilmembers: Will a change in terms improve accountability, voter participation, and citizen engagement in College Park?

As per our charge we attempted to confine our inquiry to the issues of term lengths and whether Councilmember terms should be staggered, but other issues kept popping up: the arrangement of the districts, the timing of City elections, recall elections, how to engage students at the University of Maryland. These were all issues brought up by residents and in our research. We touched on some of these topics briefly, but as they were not part of our mandate, they are not a basis for our report.

If the idea behind a change in the term is to increase involvement in College Park's government and more voter engagement in our City's elections, then maybe the better question to ask is both simpler and broader: What would encourage more people to participate in College Park's government? And: What would get more people to turn out for City elections?

The answer to that question was beyond the scope of the Commission, but it is something to bear in mind as we all attempt to make the City of College Park's government more responsive and capable, and, in turn, make the City a better place to live.

## Appendix

<i>4-Year Terms</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>No Position</i>	<i>Not Directly Relevant</i>
1/22/2019 10:49	X			
1/28/2019 18:28	X			
2/1/2019 13:10	X			
2/5/2019 19:01		X		
2/7/2019 10:45	X			
2/8/2019 9:27	X			
2/8/2019 18:05				X
Carol Nezzo, 2/11/2019 Forum		X		
David Gray, 2/11/2019 Forum		X		
David Dorsch, 2/11/2019 Forum		X		
Mary Cook, 2/11/2019 Forum		X		
Mark Shroder, 2/11/2019 Forum				X
Robert Swanson, 2/11/2019 Forum		X		
Carol Poor, 2/11/2019 Forum		X		
Dawn Powers, 2/19/2019	X			
James Garvin, 2/21/2019		X		
Dawn Budd, 3/6/2019		X		
David Dorsch, 3/6/2019		X		
Mary Hartnett, 3/7/2019	X			
Mary King, 3/10/2019		X		
Richard Hageman, 3/11/2019		X		
Cliff Bedore, 3/11/2019		X		
Jordan Schakner, 3/11/2019		X		
Carol Macknis, Card Submission		X		
David Dorsch, Card Submission		X		
Michael Passarella-George, Card Sub.		X		
Jill Samuels, Card Submission		X		
Joe McNamara, Card Submission		X		
Pauline Hutcherson, Card Submission		X		
Donna McNamara, Card Submission		X		
Meredith E(?), Card Submission		X		
John Kinnard, Card Submission		X		
Fred Hicks, Card Submission		X		
Joan Kinnard, Card Submission		X		
Janet Cavanagh, Card Submission		X		
Wijitha Ellepola, Card Submission		X		
Jessica Gajarsa, Card Submission		X		
Jordan Shackner, Card Submission		X		
Karen Needles, Card Submission		X		
Marjorie Richardson, Card Submission		X		
Matthew Ward, Card Submission		X		
Hazel Holder, Card Submission		X		
Mary Handy, Card Submission		X		
Kevin Young, Card Submission		X		

Linda Rippeon, Card Submission		X		
Sheila Salicrup, Card Submission		X		
Carol Nezzo, Card Submission		X		
Mary Cook, Card Submission		X		
R. Chhakchhuala, Card Submission		X		
Joseph Ervin, Card Submission		X		
Joyce Taylor, Card Submission		X		
Howard J(?), Card Submission		X		
L. Chhakchhuala, Card Submission		X		
Feliciano Garcia, Card Submission		X		
Tom Pasta, Card Submission		X		
Panel Chnott, Card Submission		X		
Albert Scully, Card Submission		X		
Donna Weene, Card Submission		X		
Lori Martin, Card Submission		X		
John James, Card Submission		X		
Roberto Lizzetti, Card Submission		X		
Dean Dehaas, Card Submission		X		
Ruth James, Card Submission		X		
Kennis Termini, Card Submission		X		
Lelreta Blair, Card Submission		X		
Pat Hael, Card Submission		X		
Christopher West, Card Submission		X		
Tammy Cowfer, Card Submission		X		
Jon West, Card Submission		X		
William Dougherty, Card Submission		X		
Ann Bolduc, Card Submission		X		
Robert Shackett, Card Submission		X		
Ray Bolduc, Card Submission		X		
Eugene Glover, Card Submission		X		
Wayne Cumberland, Card Submission		X		
Robert Peterson, Card Submission		X		
Lucie Capule, Card Submission		X		
James Mills, Card Submission		X		
Michael Chapman, Card Submission		X		
David Turley, Card Submission		X		
Darlene White, Card Submission		X		
Brendan McAndrew, Card Submission		X		
Tina McCloud, Card Submission		X		
Elizabeth Weissbrod, Card Submission		X		
Walter Brockway, Card Submission		X		
Barbara Elliott, Card Submission		X		
Vern Aum, Card Submission		X		
Anna Ubeda, Card Submission		X		
Julie & Chuck Forker Montrie	X			
Nick Brennan	X			
Karen Garvin		X		
Joan Poor		X		
Seth Gomoljak, 3/30/2019		X		

David Gray, 4/18/2019		X		
Havis Lee, 4/19/2019		X		
Les Booth, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
Christine Nagle, 3/11/2019 Forum	X			
David Gray, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
Carol Macknis, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
Marcia Booth, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
Oscar Gregory, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
James Garvin, 3/11/2019 Forum				X
Carol Nezzo, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
David Dorsch, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
Mary Cook, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
S. Balachandran, 4/30/2019		X		

\*highlighted names indicate individuals who submitted input in multiple ways

<i>Staggered Terms</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>No Position</i>	<i>Not Directly Relevant</i>
1/22/2019 10:49	X			
1/28/2019 18:28	X			
2/1/2019 13:10	X			
2/5/2019 19:01			X	
2/7/2019 10:45			X	
2/8/2019 9:27		X		
2/8/2019 18:05				X
Carol Nezzo, 2/11/2019 Forum			X	
David Gray, 2/11/2019 Forum			X	
David Dorsch, 2/11/2019 Forum			X	
Mary Cook, 2/11/2019 Forum		X		
Mark Shroder, 2/11/2019 Forum				X
Robert Swanson, 2/11/2019 Forum			X	
Carol Poor, 2/11/2019 Forum	X			
Dawn Powers, 2/19/2019		X		
James Garvin, 2/21/2019		X		
Dawn Budd, 3/6/2019			X	
David Dorsch, 3/6/2019			X	
Mary Hartnett, 3/7/2019	X			
Mary King, 3/10/2019		X		
Richard Hageman, 3/11/2019			X	
Cliff Bedore, 3/11/2019		X		
Jordan Schakner, 3/11/2019			X	
Carol Macknis, Card Submission			X	
David Dorsch, Card Submission			X	
Michael Passarella-George, Card Sub.			X	
Jill Samuels, Card Submission			X	
Joe McNamara, Card Submission			X	
Pauline Hutcherson, Card Submission			X	
Donna McNamara, Card Submission			X	
Meredith E(?), Card Submission			X	
John Kinnard, Card Submission			X	

Fred Hicks, Card Submission			X	
Joan Kinnard, Card Submission			X	
Janet Cavanagh, Card Submission			X	
Wijitha Ellepola, Card Submission			X	
Jessica Gajarsa, Card Submission			X	
Jordan Shackner, Card Submission			X	
Karen Needles, Card Submission			X	
Marjorie Richardson, Card Submission			X	
Matthew Ward, Card Submission			X	
Hazel Holder, Card Submission			X	
Mary Handy, Card Submission			X	
Kevin Young, Card Submission			X	
Linda Rippeon, Card Submission			X	
Sheila Salicrup, Card Submission			X	
Carol Nezzo, Card Submission			X	
Mary Cook, Card Submission			X	
R. Chhalchhuala, Card Submission			X	
Joseph Ervin, Card Submission			X	
Joyce Taylor, Card Submission			X	
Howard J(?), Card Submission			X	
L. Chhakchhuala, Card Submission			X	
Feliciano Garcia, Card Submission			X	
Tom Pasta, Card Submission			X	
Panel Chnott, Card Submission			X	
Albert Scully, Card Submission			X	
Donna Weene, Card Submission			X	
Lori Martin, Card Submission			X	
John James, Card Submission			X	
Roberto Lizzetti, Card Submission			X	
Dean Dehaas, Card Submission			X	
Ruth James, Card Submission			X	
Kennis Termini, Card Submission			X	
Lelreta Blair, Card Submission			X	
Pat Hael, Card Submission			X	
Christopher West, Card Submission			X	
Tammy Cowfer, Card Submission			X	
Jon West, Card Submission			X	
William Dougherty, Card Submission			X	
Ann Bolduc, Card Submission			X	
Robert Shackett, Card Submission			X	
Ray Bolduc, Card Submission			X	
Eugene Glover, Card Submission			X	
Wayne Cumberland, Card Submission			X	
Robert Peterson, Card Submission			X	
Lucie Capule, Card Submission			X	
James Mills, Card Submission			X	
Michael Chapman, Card Submission			X	
David Turley, Card Submission			X	
Darlene White, Card Submission			X	

Brendan McAndrew, Card Submission			X	
Tina McCloud, Card Submission			X	
Elizabeth Weissbrod, Card Submission			X	
Walter Brockway, Card Submission			X	
Barbara Elliott, Card Submission			X	
Vern Aum, Card Submission			X	
Anna Ubeda, Card Submission			X	
Julie & Chuck Forker Montrie			X	
Nick Brennan		X		
Karen Garvin			X	
Joan Poor	X			
Seth Gomoljak, 3/30/2019			X	
David Gray, 4/18/2019			X	
Havis Lee, 4/19/2019			X	
Les Booth, 3/11/2019 Forum			X	
Christine Nagle, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
David Gray, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
Carol Macknis, 3/11/2019 Forum	X			
Marcia Booth, 3/11/2019 Forum		X		
Oscar Gregory, 3/11/2019 Forum			X	
James Garvin, 3/11/2019 Forum				X
Carol Nezzo, 3/11/2019 Forum			X	
David Dorsch, 3/11/2019 Forum			X	
Mary Cook, 3/11/2019 Forum			X	
S. Balachandran, 4/30/2019			X	

CRC PUBLIC FORUM, FEBRUARY 11, 2019 CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION  
PUBLIC FORUM #1

CITY OF COLLEGE PARK CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS 4500 KNOX ROAD  
COLLEGE PARK, MD 20740

PRESENT: CHAIR CAMERON THURSTON; COMMISSIONERS BROOKS BOLIEK,  
DAN ALPERT, JOHN KROUSE, NATHAN RICKARD, NORA EIDELMAN, NORMAND  
BERNACHE, PETER KING, RAY RANKER. ABSENT: VIRDINA GIBBS ALSO  
PRESENT: JANEEN S. MILLER, CITY CLERK, STAFF LIAISON TO THE  
COMMISSION TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

**MR. THURSTON:** Now at this time we will open up to public comments. Any attendee that  
wishes to speak this evening should have signed in at the table. Each speaker will be given 3

minutes. And each speaker is asked to state their name and residing neighborhood prior to giving public comments. I will begin by having David Gray in the queue and I will give the floor to Carol Nezzo. Please come to the podium for your public comments.

**CAROL NEZZO:** “Hello. I’m here in a bubble. I appreciate very much being able to be here and talk about my opinions without feeling that there is going to be violence when I go out, that we are in danger. We are all here in a bubble. Some people call this a shell. We are very privileged. We are very protective. My comments will have to do with using this protection that we have. We have a responsibility to use it for the best of our city. My stand is that we keep the charter as it is written. 2 year terms for the council people and mayor and 2 council members per district. If we propose to change it, then we must have a referendum and ask people in the community what their opinion is. And a referendum should be added to the ballot in November. We are going to have an election and it won’t cost us any extra money much. So no extra voting, just add the referendum to the ballot in November. I want to give my reasons why I want to keep the charter the way it is. The number of years, of course, the numbers, that is not the point, 2, 4, 5, 10. We need to look at our culture around us and what it is we can do to include people because our government is supposed to be and we hope it is, and we want it to be even better for the people, by the people, for everyone because we need people’s skills, we need people’s ideas. We are in a crucial time and we need to do that. The Federal Government has difficulty with citizens united that actually influences county and local government too. I’ve been working within the state to have an element to get rid of citizens united. And the county now has fair election fund and that is also going towards democracy. Now we as a city need to use our responsibility, to use our privilege the best way we can to encourage citizens to step up to the plate, to be engaged and I believe that every 2 years elections is the best way. There are other ways too that we have to look into. It’s not just having 2 year terms. Fair election fund would be a good thing for our city to have. Just as the county has voted to have a fair election fund. So I ask you to think about the environment we live in where people don’t really trust governments whether it’s federal, state, county or local governments and people don’t involve themselves. Thank you.” MR. BERNACHE: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, can we ask the lady to provide her name for the record and neighborhood so we all know. **NEZZO:** “My name is Carol Nezzo and I live in Calvert Hills.



**THURSTON:** Thank you. I have David Dorsch in the queue and I'd like to give David Gray the floor.

**DAVID GRAY:** "My name is David Gray and I live in Yarrow. I'm against this. I think 4 year terms is an absurd concept. This is, city council is freshmen politics. Basically this is where people start their careers. 4 year terms will just scare off people because they can't make a 4 year commitment. People do not know what they will be doing in 4 years. Federal workers aren't getting paid on a regular basis now. No one has certainty where their lives are going to be in 4 years unless you are really well off or retired. So the only people who think they are going to run for 4 year terms, are people who you know are extremely wealthy, or retired, or set in life. That discourages people from the community from participating in this system. And if you know conversely if they do something that comes up in their life, they may have to leave. And so we will have empty vacancies on the council and have to have special elections for that. This has basically developed by the Mayor as a problem that doesn't exist. The city has worked functioned perfectly well for decades and decades with 2 year terms. There is no compelling reason at all to change the current system. He uses the example of Rockville and all the great things they have done there. Rockville is a vastly different city than ours. They are vastly wealthier. They have a normal demographic. They don't have a huge student population coming in and out. And they also have all their seats are all at large. We have large disparity between good participation in each council, sorry each district. So Districts 2 and 4 have much smaller voter turnouts than Districts 1 and 3. And this is basically you are having you know 25 percent of the electorate of the vote being cast determining half the seats on the council. You know this is, this is all basically done as a form of compression against students so they can't influence city affairs. 4 year terms don't serve any problems from the standpoint and the Mayor basically said oh well we got these people, new people come on and nobody knows what to do and it slows things down. The city has done great things with 2 year terms. All the things we have done with 2 year terms. The Hotel, this, that, whatever, everything done with 2 year terms. And that most people who run for council as incumbents win. Only 6 incumbents in the last 10 elections were defeated by new comers, only 6 incumbents were defeated. So people you know do an alright job. They'll do fine. Most people will leave the council because they don't want to be on the council anymore. Because their lives have changed. They don't like it. They don't like people

who are on the council. Maybe It's not a very fun job. It doesn't pay very good. You have to deal with the public. And there is all sorts of headaches. So maybe the fun goes away after a couple years. Conversely you have had only 4 people who have represented District 2 for the last 20 years. That's almost House of Lords level of you know of longevity. Conversely 2 year terms give a manor of control for the public. If people do a good job, they can do it and they will be re-elected. Certainly 4 year terms says I don't want to be responsible to the public. That the Mayor is basically saying on that broach rag that I have to respond to people saying you are doing a good job or not.

**THURSTON:** Thank you. I have Mary Cook in the queue and I'd like to give the floor to David Dorsch.

**DAVID DORSCH:** "Hi David Dorsch, 4607 Calvert Road. Yes I'm a citizen of College Park just over 45 years. In fact I'm just looking at the pictures on the wall. I've been here through half of those people who are up there. So when you look at council positions, Mayor positions, one of the things this commission I think was supposed to do is to tell us the pros and the cons of making this change will do. And I haven't heard anything from the commission on what the pros and cons might be. You guys might do that later. I don't know. What's the purpose of the mayor and the council is to represent their citizens to form this governmental body here and if you do what your citizens want you to do, then generally, if you want to continue on the council, you do so. And I'm just mention Jack Parry as one of the people. Monroe Dennis currently serving here. I forget how many terms he's been on here. So these people, they have an interest, they want to do it. Fine, but the main thing is they represent their constituents. They come forward with what their constituents want. And this is basically what the function of these council members is supposed to be. Unlike the federal government where we have some lifetime members. Ah, the federal government was never really set up to be a lifetime thing. It was for the citizens to come in, serve their government for a period of time and then go back and do what they were doing just like what George Washington did. I don't see any need to change this term limit or number. We have been very successful with the way this government has been set up for the 40 or 45 years that I have been here. It works well. Maybe we could get some more people interested in the council positions or running for them. I don't think we should change. I think we should leave it exactly where it is. Thanks."

**THURSTON:** I have Mark Schroder in the queue and I'd like to give the floor to Mary Cook.

**MARY COOK:** "Thank you for listening to me tonight. I'm Mary Cook. I live up in Cherry Hill. I live in a lovely neighborhood. I have a question for you before you start. If I speak tonight, will I still be allowed to speak at Davis." MR. THURSTON: Yes. MS. COOK: "Ok, I had that question addressed to me and I wanted to know the answer. Thank you very much. I don't have a lot to add from my friends to the south here. I want to speak from personal experience as being a council member and having run for mayor. Last time that I was in office a couple years, I heard that was when this idea was first brought up. There was a lot of grumbling. I have to go out and campaign every 2 years. Yeah, so. That's what you should do. You have to go and talk to the people every 2 years. I have to honestly say I don't see my councilmembers in my neighborhood. So I believe, this is just ridiculous that people should be elected every 4 years. Another complaint that the council members had is oh the learning curve. Yes there is a learning curve. But you know what first get involved in the city. Get involved with some committees and you won't have such a big learning curve. As these gentlemen rightly said, think about Jack Parry, think about Bob Catlin, think about these people who have been on the council for years and years. Yes it is a little bit trying in the first year, but you know what, you can catch up. Another grumbling I heard, you have to go out and raise funds every 2 years. Be real, this is College Park. You don't have to go out and raise that many funds. I think the mayoral race is getting a bit ridiculous, but at the council level, it is positively doable. I don't think that is any reason to change to 4 year terms. You also address the topic of whether or not we should have stagger the concurrent terms. I believe that concurrent terms are the best way to go. It's most effective and most cost effective and the most efficient. It doesn't make any sense to have our staff running elections every other year or every 2 years. And finally as Ms. Nezzo brought up, we need to take this to referendum. Thank you for your time."

**THURSTON:** I'd like to give the floor to Mark Schroder.

**MARK SHRODER:** "Good evening ladies and gentleman. I'm Mark Shroder and the neighborhood I live in is Hollywood. I want to second nearly everything Mr. Gray said from a slightly different perspective. In my considered opinion the council has asked you the

wrong question. The question they should have asked you is how can we design a College Park election system that better represents the people of College Park. And it is frankly not a secret that the College Park election system is set up to minimize the representation of students. It is set up that way because most of us who are homeowners are concerned that excessive student representation in the city would lead to instability in our city government. That's understandable. Let's try and come up with a structure that allows students to be represented fairly in this city where they pay almost all of their taxes and are not subject to the ordinance. Well, I think it can be done. I think you could have a real student seat in the City of College Park, draw the lines properly, um, but just have that student be representing his or her constituents for one year. A student can't really make a commitment for longer than that. We can have an election every year for the student seat. What would we do with the other seats? Well for one thing we will have a second district and a fourth district that have got bites taken out of them in their current form. And maybe they should be expanded into the third district and first district where the people of those districts are currently very, very under-represented. There are many elections where the first district had more than half the voters, people who actually turned out and got one quarter of the council. Not right. As for the matter of where experienced council members are better than inexperienced council members, I would say probably a little bit. However, I would have to mark that some of the major misadventures of the City in the time that I have lived here, which included turning a pension system over to the state, for no particular good reason so far as the tax payers are concerned. That was made with the council that had plenty of experience. Thank you."

**ROBERT SWANSON:** "Hi I am Robert Swanson and I live in Old Town on Howard Lane. I didn't hear the conversation; I came in a little late. But what I wanted to know if whether or not, should you decide to have 4 year elections, will there be a recall procedure for these council people? Perhaps they don't do anything and they just sit there and sitting out a 4 year term. They do that and you know they don't do anything. I seconded all of what everyone says here, you know, 2 year election. I think they are preferable to the 4 year. There are a lot of advantages and the disadvantages have been overplayed. Thank you."

**CAROL POOR:** "My name is Carol Poor. I am now a resident of Howard Lane in Old Town. Before that, lived in Autoville Drive. I've been here a number of years. I don't want to say how many to give my age away. Listening to this and not having heard a lot of discussion

and looking at the council and looking at the city through the years, I would say that 2 year terms are the ideal. Economically it makes the same sense. If you had 4 year terms, you would certainly want, there would be no way you should ever do a 4 year term if you didn't have those intervals so that you would 2 – you get my drift, overlapping. Economically it doesn't make any sense. But as long as we have no term limits on our city government, on our council members or mayor, I think the current system is admirable and makes more sense than option that I have heard of yet. Thank you.” MR. THURSTON: You can post your comments online through the city website. THE PUBLIC FORUM CONCLUDED AT 7:57 P.M. PREPARED BY SHERYL DEWALT, CONTRACT SECRETARY

PUBLIC FORUM #2 - 1 CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION PUBLIC FORUM #2  
MARCH 11, 2019 - 7:30 PM

DAVIS HALL 9217 51ST AVENUE COLLEGE PARK, MD 20740

PRESENT: Cameron Thurston, Chair, District 2 Dan Alpert, District 2 Peter King, District 4 John Krouse, District 1 Nathan Rickard, District 1 Nora Eidelman, District 1 Virdina Gibbs, Calvert Hills Norman Bernache, District 4 ABSENT: Brooks Boliek, District 2 ALSO PRESENT: Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk, Staff Liaison to the Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS:

**LES BOOTH:** Daniels Park. I am against the extension of the term limits to 4 years. That um, I don't think it's necessary. Two years is plenty for us to figure out if somebody is going to be worthwhile or not and see if we want other people in there. I would even consider it if something would be put in there to give us an opportunity to recall a candidate or somebody that we deem unfit during the course. Thank you. **CHRISTINE NAGLE:** Thank you Chair Thurston and members of the commission. My name is Christine Nagle and I live in Daniels Park Community. I'd like to thank you all for accepting the City's charge to come with pros and cons regarding the four-year terms and staggered times in City Council and for your time tonight. I feel that four-year terms could be beneficial. As someone who served on the City Council I do know that it takes a new member at least a year to come up to full speed on city affairs. And additionally, all council members in that second term year are thinking about election which is very disruptive to council business. There is a potential for the council to vote more cohesively and to be more collegial if they know they are going to be working together for a four-year period. I also see that a fouryear term would reduce costs for the city. It will allow staff to focus on other things other than elections. The concern that I heard again, and I do share is accountability by electing someone for four years who may not be responsive. I agree they may cause a good measure to add to prevent this and to add the ability to relieve someone who is unresponsive to their concerns. This is something that members of other municipalities have including our neighbors in Riverdale Park and Bowie. With respect to staggered terms, I don't see that they don't see that they have any benefit and I see that benefits gained from a four-year term go away when you have the staggered terms. The need to reduce costs, there is no continuity on the council. Additionally, I think staggered terms may add confusion for voters. The supposed benefit I have heard about staggered terms

is that not everyone would be elected at the same time. We would have a whole new slate of council members. We have not had that happen in College Park and I don't see that as a likelihood. This isn't in your control, but I would like to mention that if this does go for referendum to the voters, I think these questions are distinct and separate and should be two questions regarding four-year terms and two-year, excuse, regarding four-year terms and staggered terms to voice their opinion on each. Thank you.

**DAVID GRAY:** Yes, hello, my name is David Gray and I live in Yarrow. I spoke at the last the meeting and so at that time I primarily voiced my opposition of four-year terms. I thought that they were unnecessary and added barriers for people running for office that that was a very high hurdle. At this time I'm going to focus more on the staggered terms aspect. As Ms. Nagle just mentioned there no is the economic benefit to having staggered terms as you are effectively still running elections every two years. And running elections is effectively most entirely fixed costs so it doesn't really matter if you are running one candidate, four candidates or nine candidates. You know the machines cost the same, staffing the polls so there is no intrinsic benefit to tax payers. And you get to the complication of that if you have two seats in play at the same time you will have a higher probability of maybe a newer person breaking into one of those seats. You know incumbents win almost all the time. If you stagger the terms, you are likely to have one candidate that is an incumbent and the probability of the newer is not great. But in 3 people on it for 2, it is possible. But 2 people running for 1, it sorts of like the math probability issue. 4 people running for 2 seats is not terrible odds. 3 people running for 1 seat is pretty lousy odds. So I would urge this committee to err on the side of making sure that public participation that people can and want to run for office is something measured and benefits for the City. That is just all the benefits that I supposedly heard would make the council a lot better or that people won't have to worry about re-election. That's not really a problem for me. That's not a problem for the residents in the City entirely. If the councilmembers don't get along, you know they are not going to get along over two years or four years time. I remember council meetings that there was clear people didn't get along and you might have people not serving out their term because it's four years. But a two year term, people can suffer through bad company, but they may not suffer through four. There may be more turnover as people may not serve out their four years terms. Thank you very much.

**CAROL MACKNIS:** I am against the four year terms. I think two years terms have worked out very well for this city. Having two year terms makes each elective official much much more accountable to the voting population. It gives the voters a chance to hold these officials accountable. If an official is doing a good job they get re-elected. If not, two years is a very reasonable time to get rid of them through electing another representative. The cost of having an election every two years, I think, is very reasonable considering how much this City has in its budget. I disagree that it's a major economic benefit of getting rid of an election every two years. With respect to the code, from my observation, almost every new person has been involved in something with the City so they are more aware of what's going on. They are bringing in new ideas, maybe the new ideas impact the learning curve. But it shouldn't. When it comes to staggered terms, if this charter change comes about, we definitely need staggered terms. Now my understanding of staggered terms is I'm in District 1. I have two representatives. Each time one will be new and the other will not be so there is always someone keeping the idea. So every two years I'll get a brand new council. Maybe after four years, half of them have two years experience. That's not what I heard or understand. Probably my misunderstanding of what people before me mentioned. Also it can have a negative impact on someone who is with the university even though there is always a question of why the university have to be involved. But it can have a major impact because they are normally here for four years at the most. Some are even here for two years if they are in the graduate program. So it would make an impact that they would have to consider not even running because they couldn't fulfill the four years. I think there are two items that have not been mentioned: one there should be a recall mechanism of which we do not have and is not listed. Number two I think there should be term limits. Thank you. I'm sorry, Carol Macknis. I'm in District 1.

**MARCIA BOOTH:** I'm Marcia Booth, District 1 in Daniels Park. Thank you very much for having us here this evening. I would like to express my dismay with the fact that City Council would consider changing the limits from two to four without having some sort of a resolution or having a term amendment that we would be able to recall a councilperson who is not performing to the benefit of the people they are representing. We do not have that at this time. We do not have a mechanism for removing anybody from the City Council other than through elections. To allow somebody to remain on City Council for four years and not



performing would not be to the benefit of the voters. So if you are going to consider extending from two years to four years than you should have included in the charter amendment a mechanism to recall somebody who is sitting on the City Council. With reason, not just for willy nilly. Now with regards to having people serve two years and then having a new election to have another group of people come in for two years as staggered terms, I think that would not be beneficial because it would not have the cohesiveness of City Council which is what you are looking for supposedly. And also the same amount of costs because you would have been having elections every two years. I'm not in favor of term limits because I believe we have several people in City Council who have been for quite a while and have done a wonderful job. Thank you.

**OSCAR GREGORY:** I live in College Park Woods. I'm going to try and be very brief. And that is to say usually when you do things that drastically fundamentally change the constitution in our City, you have to have a pretty darn good reason for doing that. So far, I have heard none. Do you want to extend to four year terms because somebody hasn't, doesn't understand the government way? You should kind of know that before you even walk in, but even still, it doesn't take that long. And besides people before them have had no problem trying to catch up. So there has to be another reason for that and so far have not heard it. Most folks have you heard before, you've heard all this stuff before, it seems to me. You already know this. I'm just trying to figure out what you are trying to decide on because so most folks get re-elected anyway. The history of College Park in 50 years, the last time we had an at large seat sorry was eight years ago, sorry in 63, but most folks usually get re-elected and when they do and when they decide to leave that's when a ticket opens up. And on top of it, just pointing out, students are exempt from running for office entirely because they may not be able to commit for four years, if you go that route. The idea that councilmembers get distracted from, because they have to run for office, this doesn't cut the mustard. Usually you have to have, the first time you can even start to campaigning is in September for a November ballot. So you have like two months worth of and you should be going out and talking to people all the time. This body right now wants to move themselves away from the residents and to do policy. So actually four year terms would allow you to do that pretty well. This method right now that we have at two years is the closest we as residents to democracy. To be able to pick people or to reward people that are doing a good

job and other people that will do a better job for us. The last thing I want to say is that we have sampling of surveys, which is what folks should be doing, preliminary sampling of neighborhoods, I have with me cards that residents that are stating they want to keep the current system. They are fine with it. They don't want any changes. If I could turn these in. Just real quick, preliminary findings, 51 percent, over half the residents that we polled want to keep the same thing, the way that it is. About 20 percent want to change it. About 26 percent really don't have to think about it. And 10 percent just slammed the door in my face. Those are preliminary findings across the board. We will continue to do the surveys. We need to talk to the residents and find out. This is a great crowd and we need to talk to the rest of the crowd as well. Sorry for taking so much time. Thank you.

**JAMES GARVIN:** James Patrick Garvin, 4805 Drexel Road, College Park. I have brought a lot of books to take quotes from. "The Federalist" "The Spirit of the Laws" by Montesquieu in my battered old 1873 copy. I used that in council chambers. I brought the "Constitution of Maryland" the elective franchise clause and the battered old "Constitution of the United States." And then I remember who I'm dealing with. I'm dealing with the Council of College Park. And if I use these words, I will only be mocked. I am one of those filthy, disenfranchised residents, not a college student. I'm not a university developer. I don't matter. And in the conflict we had the last year about citizens not voting right, I'm dealing with the College Park Mayor, PJ, Patrick and this Constitution of Maryland and the United States back to them. So why would I use these words when it only brings mockery? Why would I use these words when I really don't have a voice when there is a mechanism under way. And I cannot alter that mechanism. I am tilting at windmills because I am a resident. The Mayor and this Council ought to weigh in and let everyone be part of College Park. And what they really want is an electorate that they want to engineer. Look at these old people. They are not part of that electorate because they are old. They are conservative. They are knowledgeable and have lived life. We know what we are doing. We are raising children. I have carburetors to clean and grass to cut, yet I am here tilting windmills because I know my count is not my own. I am against an extension of terms and I'm against staggered terms because I distrust them. I think they will only be used to outmaneuver this group and disenfranchise them more. Thank you very much. (CLAPPING AND SOME SAYING YEAH AND ONE PERSON SAYING EVEN THOUGH I AM OLD)

**CAROL NEZZO:** From District 3 and I was here last time so if you will recall, I like two year terms. And I have pictures of people in the street. Some are singing, some are dancing, someone who does accounting. Someone who does landscaping. People who have expertise and skills like you all do. Thank you for coming and volunteering your skills. We need to have government of the people, by the people, (UNINTELLIGIBLE). And that means by the people. Thank you. **DAVID DORSCH:** Good evening. My name is David Dorsch and I've been a resident here for about 45 years or so. And for the 45 years I've been in College Park, the City Council has had terms of two years and it's worked well for all these years. I just remember Jack Perry, who was on this Council for many, many years, because the constituents wanted him to represent their wishes which he did. He did not spend that much time running for election. He didn't have to. His residents wanted him. There are even current members of this council who have been elected every two years for many elections. Why because the constituents want them. Other jurisdictions of have different terms of office for various reasons. College Park doesn't have to be like that. We can still be unique if it comes to that and maintain our two year terms. Maintaining the two year terms of office will eliminate the possibility the City will have to make to changes in the City Charter. My councilmember is doing what I think is in my and the City's best interest so I vote for him. And if not, I don't want to have to wait another two years to vote to replace him. I ask this commission to consider all the facts, the City's history, and recommend to the Council that the current two year terms for the Councilmembers be retained. Thank you.

**MARY COOK:** Mary Cook, 4705 Kiernan Road. I've been a resident of the City almost 20 years. I think everyone up here knows what I think. That our elected officials should be elected every two years. The reason I'm getting up tonight is to point out that if this should go through, if the Council decides to change our current code to four years that we should have the right to recall. And the other item I wanted to point out was, and maybe somebody's done it already, I'm sorry I'm late, is that you may or may not have seen the comments that were already put online and the names were redacted. You know what, my name is out there already. I think those people names should be as well. And that's the only comment I wanted to make. Thank you very much for serving us. Thank you. Respectfully submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

## ONLINE COMMENT SUBMISSIONS

I own 2 rental houses in the Berwyn neighborhood of College Park, so while I am not a current resident of College Park (though I did live there from 2001- 2015), I have a heavy interest in the representation of College Park citizens, including my 9 tenants. I support a 4-year, staggered council term. I agree with the arguments that 2 years is simply too short to be brought up-to-speed on a lot of the issues, and institutional memory is lost with changeover. For example, 10 years ago, when Rent Stabilization was a hot topic, it would have been beneficial to have a 4-year staggered system so that at least half the council at any particular time would know the ins-and-outs of the saga. Since such a change would apply after the results of the next elections, it is clear that the current councilmembers would not be able to use this to extend their terms in a negative, power-grabbing way. Thanks, 1/28/2019 18:28

Extend council and mayoral terms to 4 years and stagger the elections for council members. It's stupid to have 2-year terms. 2/1/2019 13:10

I support this proposed change. I especially support the staggered terms. It's ridiculous that voters are expected to cast 2 votes for the same office with the risk that one vote could cancel out the other. Some people are driven to "bullet vote," throwing away one of their two votes to avoid their second vote cancelling out their first. People who cast both of their votes have more impact, but don't always help the candidates they mean to help. This undermines voters' confidence that the results truly reflect the will of the people. There are different ways this problem could be solved (ranked choice voting, for example), but staggered terms would solve it while giving us the added benefit of a more stable City Council focused on serving the city rather than campaigning for re-election. 2/5/2019 19:01

I agree that reviewing the charter is a good way to ensure that it is keeping up with the needs of the city. When considering a change of length of term, I think there are a few targets to focus on (in order of priority): 1. Allow citizens to have the final say on any changes to term or benefits for city council members 2. Not mixing national and city elections dates 3. Ensuring all communities (including students) are heard and have the power to influence policy 4. Allow council members to gain experience and maintain contact with their district. 5. Eliminate duplicate representation 6. Allow for healthy turnover 7. Convenience of city council members to reduce election efforts and costs On the face of it, increasing the length

of term for city council reduces democracy. It reduces the power of the vote, the responsiveness to the constituents, and the ability for the citizen to impact civic decision making frequently. Movements to change these things should be citizen-led. Now is not the time to be reducing democracy, as the world and even in our own country there are efforts to limit citizen involvement, Let us take a strong look at the entire makeup of the council, and continue determining how we can bring more power to the people and increase responsiveness. 2/7/2019 10:45

I want to write to state my support for both proposals of prolonging the term of elected officials. I don't feel as strongly about staggering the terms. I feel very strongly that 2 year terms are simply too short for representatives to legislate in both the short and long-term interests of the community as a whole. By serving in the capacity of a council member for 4 years, the candidate/representative shows a commitment to the community that they will remain in the area for the allotted time and make decisions based on policy rather than on concerns for the next campaign. I feel very strongly that the current 2 year terms are too short and fully support increasing them to 4 years. Thank you. 2/8/2019 9:27

I support increasing the term limits to four years. For me, it is important to have leadership representing us who are immersed and invested in our wonderful neighborhood. Also, four year terms allow for involvement in longerterm projects without interruption and transfer of power. I do not support staggered elections, since it drains resources every two years as policies are paused while election campaigns run. Four year terms that begin at the same time allow for a longer stretch when policy decisions can be made. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. 2/8/2019 18:05

Here is my point of view: -- any desired Charter amendment to extend to four-year term should also include term limits. No official should be permitted to serve more than a single four-year term. -- the term limit would apply to the Mayor and every member of City Council. -- currently-serving incumbents would NOT benefit from the Charter amendment. In other words, the clock would not start over for them if the amendment is adopted. They would simply serve out the remainder of their current terms and leave. -- likewise, at the end of their current (pre-amendment) terms, currently serving Mayor/Councilmembers would NOT be eligible to run again for four years.

I am for changing the length of term from 2 to 4 years. It is a waste of energy and resources to constantly be thinking about the next election cycle. Don't stagger the election either. Let all members become one council body over 4 years. I think this will help the council focus on making progress instead of worrying about elections. We should be thanking those that run and rewarding those that win by giving them a fair chance at progress. 2/21/2019 14:50

James Garvin 4805 DREXEL RD I greatly oppose changing the length of the term for elected officials from two to four years, and see no benefits and have extreme concerns that staggering those terms will lead to a unchangeable political block in the mayor and council positions that can never be altered or ever hear permanent residents or small or single family concerns and focus only on the university and its students. It is a form of election control very similar to the gerrymandering the Maryland democrat party feels it is right to impose.. 3/6/2019 11:49

Dawn Budd 5010 Paducah Road I appreciate the challenge you have before you. While there are many positives and negatives for either 2 year terms or 4 year terms, I believe the better choice is to keep it to 2 year terms. Why? Because the closer to the people, the more important it is to keep the terms shorter. Especially in a metropolitan area, people tend to move frequently. It could be that in 4 years, many of the people who elected a council-member have moved out of the area. I do not know if this is why the Federal Government decided members of the House of Representatives only serve 2 years -- since they represent an area of population, not that full body of the state like Senators. If a person is doing a good job, they will be reelected (look at Kabir) without much need to campaign -- BUT we need to be able to replace those who are not working in the best interest of the constituents in as short a time as possible. Thank you for your dedication, hard work and fairness. 3/6/2019 17:45

David Dorsch 4607 Calvert Road I see no reason to extend the terms of members of the council from 2 to 4 years. The system we have had for all these years works just fine. Those who are elected and do what their residents expect or want of them will be reelected over and over again just like Jack Perry was. 3/7/2019 12:56

Mary Hartnett 4915 BLACKFOOT ROAD Four years is a reasonable time for a term of an elected official. With the increasing costs of elections to the candidates and City of College Park, elections every four years could easily reduce this cost without a great impact on the

quality of citizen representation. Also if these elections coincided with national/state elections I believe even more dollars could be saved. Staggered terms would provide for continuity of governance and provide for smoother transitions as new members join the City Council or office of mayor. 3/10/2019 12:14

Mary King 3413 Duke St Dear Committee for Charter Review, It is with dismay that I submit my comments concerning changes to our city council wishing to change our structure of government by extending council terms to four years and imposing staggered elections. Just this past year our council brought in the mayor of Rockville to give her views on four-year terms. Members of council remarked then about the general lack of interest in citizens of College Park to run for election. Some stated that they had run for election many times unopposed. Also, recently our council passed an ordinance authorizing voting at the Stamp Student Union on campus. During that discussion the council lamented the poor voter turnout in College Park. Some districts have voter turnout of less than 10 percent, One of the justifications for a Stamp Student Union polling place was to encourage voting. Make it easier, We want people to vote. Was their discussion about the possible reasons that people don't vote? No, no discussion at all was had on this topic. So, in the climate of poor voter turnout and lack of citizens willing to run for public office, our city council now wishes to make their terms longer. Why? In the Spring of 2017 Councilwoman Kujawa first brought up this issue to council. During discussion then-Councilwoman Stephanie Stullich commented that the door knocking during the campaign was when she most heard from constituents. She also stated that when she wasn't opposed for election, she sometimes didn't bother doing even this. Overall she remarked that elections every two years kept the council more attuned to their constituents. City government is government closest to the citizens. Let's keep it that way and continue with elections every two years. And let's dismiss even the suggestion of staggered terms. And let's maintain equal representation from every part of the city, too. No at-large seats. Mary King College Park Woods 3/11/2019 13:33

Richard Hageman 9207 48th Place I remain convinced that 2 year terms for Mayor and Council seats is suitable for College Park. I do not believe that the term is too short to allow for a learning curve and subsequent execution of the duties of office. Four-year terms will not allow citizens the opportunity to vote out of office those who they believe are not suited for the position, but does allow many who are responsive to their constituents to remain in office.

I think history bears me out on this, and the process has worked well for years. 3/11/2019  
13:45



To the City of College Park Charter Review Commission:

I, the undersigned, support the continuation of the two-year term in office for our elected Mayor and City Council members, as currently exists in our City Charter. If I approve of how the elected official has performed their district or mayoral representation in office, I can then choose to vote to retain them for another two years or not. I believe that our current City charter has proven to be strong, steadfast and supportive of and for the residents and does not require to be changed, altered or abridged.

In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: James E Mills

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 9714 WICHITA AVE

James E Mills  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Michael E Chapman

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 25504 LAKELAND ST.

Michael E Chapman  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: David Turley

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 9712 Wichita Ave

David Turley  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Darlene White

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 8312 Potomac Ave

Darlene White  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Brendan McAndrew

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 9708 Wichita

Brendan McAndrew

Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Tina McCloud

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 9709 Wichita Ave College Park,

Tina McCloud

Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Elizabeth Weissbrod

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 5218 Paducah Rd. College Park, MD 20740

Elizabeth Weissbrod  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: WALTER BROCKWAY

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 5212 PACCO RD CP 20740

Walter Brockway  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Barbara B. Elliott

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 5210 Palco Place  
College PK, MD 20740

Barbara B. Elliott  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Vern Ann

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 5227 Palco Place

Vern Ann  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: ANNA UBEDA

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 5110 PANDORA

  
Signature



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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Carol Macknis

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 5019 Mineola Rd, College Park, MD

Carol E. Macknis  
Signature

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Name: David Dorsey

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 4607 Calvert Road

D. Dorsey  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Michael Passarella-Genge

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4508 Albion Rd.

Michael Passarella-Genge  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: 3711 Samuels

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4512 Albion Rd.

4512 Albion Rd.  
Signature



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Name: Joe McNAMARA

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 4522 Albion Rd

Joe McNamara  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Pauline Hutcherson

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 4578 Albion Rd

Pauline Hutcherson  
Signature

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Name: DONNA MCNAMARA

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 4522 Albion Rd

Donna McNamara  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Meredith Thy

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 4502 Albion Rd

College Park, MO  
Signature Meredith Thy

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: John Kinnard

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 462 Beechwood

[Signature]  
Signature

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Name: FRED HICKS

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4510 AIBION RD

[Signature]  
Signature

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Name: Joan Kinnard

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 4612 Beechwood Rd

Joan K. Kinnard  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: JANET CAVANAGH

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 4604 Beechwood Rd

Janet Cavanagh  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Wijitha Ellepola

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 4608 Amherst Rd

Wijitha Ellepola  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Jessica Gajarsa

Resident: Yes      No     

Address: 4614 Beechwood Rd

College Park MD 20740  
Signature

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Name: Jordan Schakner

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 5206 Mineola Rd.

[Signature]  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Karen S Needles

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 6904 Carleton Terrace

Karen S Needles  
Signature



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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Marjorie V. Richardson

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4711 Berwyn House Rd  
Marjorie V. Richardson #616  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Matthew L. Ward (Sgt, USMC)

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4703 Amherst Rd.  
College Park, MD 20740  
Signature Matthew L. Ward

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Hazel Holder

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4711 Berwyn Rd #708  
Hazel Holder College Park  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: MARY WANDY

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4711 BERWYN RD #708  
MARY WANDY  
Signature



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Name: Kevin C. Young  
Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐  
Address: 5018 BERWYN Rd.  
[Signature]  
Signature

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Name: Linda Rippeon  
Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐  
Address: 5014 Berwyn Rd.  
Linda M. Rippeon  
Signature

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Name: Sheilla H. Salicrup

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4501 Amherst Rd

Sheilla H. Salicrup  
Signature

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Name: CAROL NEZZO

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4600 Amherst Rd.

Carol Nezzo  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Mary C. Cook

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4705 Kiernan Rd., College Park, MD 20740

Mary C Cook  
Signature

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Name: Roxemiana Chhakchhuak

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 9250 Limestone Pl, College P

Roxemiana  
Signature

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Name: Joseph H. Ervin

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 9240 SAINT Andrews PL, College Park, MD

Joseph H. Ervin  
Signature

2024

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Name: Joyce A H Taylor

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 3602 Marlborough Way

Joyce A H Taylor  
Signature

To the City of College Park Charter Review Commission:

I, the undersigned, support the continuation of the two-year term in office for our elected Mayor and City Council members, as currently exists in our City Charter. If I approve of how the elected official has performed their district or mayoral representation in office, I can then choose to vote to retain them for another two years or not. I believe that our current City charter has proven to be strong, steadfast and supportive of and for the residents and does not require to be changed, altered or abridged.

In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Howard Jones

Resident: Yes      No ✓

Address: 9255 Limestone Pl  
Howard Jones Sr.  
Signature

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Name: Liandingpuii Chhakchhuak

Resident: Yes      No     

Address: 9250 Limestone Pl, College Park  
Liandingpuii Chhakchhuak  
Signature

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In addition, I believe our current city's election costs are reasonable.

Name: Feliciano Garcia

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 9806 51<sup>th</sup> AV College Park

ema 20740 11/11/11  
Signature

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Name: TOM PASTA

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 5017 Appleton ST.

Thomas S. Pasta  
Signature



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Name: DANIEL CANNOTT

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 907 52nd Av

[Signature]  
Signature

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Name: Albert & Scully

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 9202 51st Av C P MD

Albert & Scully  
Signature

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Name: Donna Weene

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 9512 49<sup>th</sup> Pl College Park

  
Signature

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Name: Lori Martin

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 9804 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave 20740

  
Signature



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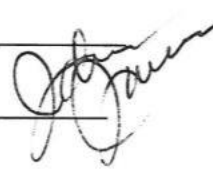
Name: JOHN R JAMES

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4906 BLACKFOOT RD

CP md 20740

Signature



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Name: Roberto Lizzetti

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 5128 Kcota ter

[Signature]

Signature

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Name: DEAN DENAAS

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 5010 APACHE ST COLLEGE PARK  
MD 20740  
[Signature]  
Signature

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Name: Ruth Patricia James

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 4906 Black Foot Rd  
College Park Ruth R James  
Signature

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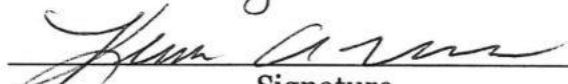
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Name: Kennis A. Termini

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 5029 Edgewood Rd

  
Signature

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Name: Helena Blair

Resident: Yes ☐ No ☐

Address: 4711 Branchville Rd

  
Signature

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Name: Pat Auel

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4904 Fox St. College Park, Md.

Pat Auel  
Signature

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Name: Christopher West

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 5029 Edgewood Rd

Chris West  
Signature

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Name: TAMMY M. COWFER

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 5300 KENESAW STREET

Tammy M. Cowfer  
Signature

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Name: Jon A West

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 5029 Edgewood Rd

Jon A West  
Signature

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Name: William Daugherty

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 4929 Hollywood Rd

William Daugherty  
Signature

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Name: C. ANN BOLDUC

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 5102 LACKAWANNA ST

C. Ann Bolduc  
Signature

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Name: Robert L SHACKETT

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 5001 Lockman Ave ST

Robert L Shackett  
Signature

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Name: Ray Bolden

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 5102 Lockman Ave ST College Park

Ray Bolden  
Signature

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Name: Eugene Glover

Resident: Yes X No     

Address: 5003 Laguna Rd.

College Park, MD 20740

Signature

Eugene Glover

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Name: WAYNE S CUMBERLAND

Resident: Yes ✓ No     

Address: 5204 LACKAWANNA ST

COLLEGE PARK MD 20740

Wayne S Cumberland

Signature



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Name: Robert C. Peterson

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 9504 Rhode Island Ave. College Park Md  
20740

Robert C. Peterson

Signature

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Name: LUCIE O. CAPULE

Resident: Yes ☒ No ☐

Address: 5031 NANTUCKET RD.  
COLLEGE PK. MD 20740

Capule

Signature

Cliff Bedore 7403 Radcliffe Drive First comment is that no matter what changes are proposed, the city charter should have a recall method for all elected officials. This becomes even more important if you go to four year terms. If you go to four year terms and stagger the terms you will still need elections every two years to keep the staggered terms in place. Don't see any advantage in voting for one rep in each district every two years. Seems like a waste of time and money. If you really want to do something useful. either make smaller districts or get rid of half the council. I see no reason to have to contact two members of the council every time I want to comment on something I know that years ago they changed the council makeup so we could effectively lock out students from the council but I dislike the duplicative effort of having to contact and wait for answers from two council members. Bottom line. I think if you're not going to substantially modify the council makeup. leave things alone. 3/12/2019 13:46

Jordan Schakner 5206 Mineola Road I am 100 percent against increasing terms to 4 years. Let me explain why the top reasons used to promote this idea - a steep learning curve for new councilmembers and the need for greater social cohesion among them - are wrong. Being a Councilmember is not an office job in which one is supposed to acclimate oneself to established social and work routines over a long period. Instead, we need new councilmembers actively and immediately questioning outdated and ineffective ways of doing things. Read "Antifragility" by the author Nassim Nicholas Taleb, which gives solid reasoning from the field of Systems Analysis on why systems in a world of increasing complexity need regular internal stresses to increase strength and flexibility in the face of problems. Without a dynamic interplay, systems like a City Council become stagnant and can actually fail when a nimble response is needed. Look no further than our U.S. Congress for an example of why an institution with long, stable careers of partisan congressmen means total dysfunction and an inability to solve long-term problems. Also, the concern about the need to constantly campaign every two years is untrue. My two Council candidates haven't campaigned at my door once in the past 2 years, and one of them never did originally. If our Council is seriously concerned with the prior knowledge of new Councilmembers, I suggest setting up a Mentorship program between new Councilmembers and seasoned or veteran ones. We certainly have enough of them in this City.

Julie & Chuck Forker Montrie 7008 Wake Forest Drive College Park Md 20740 We are strongly support changing the length of terms for elected officials from two to four years. The learning curve and adjustment period seems barely settled and underway before the next election cycle rolls around. Additionally, it takes time and resources (fiscal included) away from initiatives and projects that respective officials may be working on to focus their energies on running a re-election campaign. Julie Forker & Chuck Montrie

Nick Brennan 8321 Potomac Avenue College Park MD 20740 I support extending the Mayor and Councilmember terms to four years to create a more cohesive and effective city government. Our city officials could be more effective on moving big projects forward with more time in office and not focusing on re-election every other year or waiting on moving something forward until it is known who will be following the project through. I think that it would be more beneficial to have concurrent, as opposed to staggered terms, to reduce the resources (both financial and staff time) needed to conduct elections every two years. I do think if this does move forward, it should be put to a non-binding referendum. The same small group of people have been vocal about opposing this and random resident-led surveys are being conducted to say that a "majority" oppose this. That is not conclusive evidence, particularly when the survey is being done by a very vocal opponent to this change. Thank you!

Karen Garvin 9609 49th Ave College Park MD 20740-1617I oppose the move to four-year terms for council members. Having shorter terms means more elections and more opportunity for citizens to have input into their government.

Joan Poor 4707 Howard Lane College Park MD 20740-3512 My concerns for the Charter change to extend Council member terms from two to four years are: - Terms should NOT run concurrently; thus elections MUST be staggered (every two years) to permit better community involvement and to maintain Council skill and knowledge levels; - There would be no economic benefit to City; - Fewer incentives for citizen candidates as current commitment of weekly meetings, special events, etc., would be made greater, likely doubled; - Potential for fewer opportunities for citizen involvement if Council members don't maintain citizen communications and contacts (since change would disallow campaigning, stating positions, etc., every two years); - Student candidates would be greatly discouraged due to

length of commitment; - Contact with citizens could be more limited than currently, as campaign time brings more interaction, potentially distancing Council from residents; - If a Council person wasn't performing to level expected by citizens, there is no way to recall, per State law; - If a Council person resigned before term, special elections would be required or citizens lose representation for potentially significant period of time. - More citizen involvement could be required to watch for potential power shifts to wean out citizen involvement; - Council members should be ever more responsive to citizens as the turnover of power from citizens is greater. Possible benefits could be: - More time for Council member to learn City issues and to know City staff; - Less over-all time & effort for campaigning on part of Council member seeking re-election; - Current system has worked pretty efficiently for decades, so why incur all the work required to change? Imperative: - If Council should decide to proceed to change terms, this Charter change would be of such major importance, it would need citizen referendum for approval.

Seth Gomoljak 9705 Wichita Ave. College Park MD 20740 I see nothing wrong or any issue with a 2 year term for the city council and mayor. It should say as is, but I know my views do not matter. The council is going to do what they want, as they always do.

3/30/2019 9:10 Seth Gomoljak 9705 Wichita Ave. College Park MD 20740 I see nothing wrong or any issue with a 2 year term for the city council and mayor. It should say as is, but I know my views do not matter. The council is going to do what they want, as they always do.

4/18/19

To the members of the Charter Review Commission in regards to four-year terms for city elected officials:

I've attended/watched more than my share of city council meetings over the years and I haven't heard a resident come up to the podium and say something along the lines of 'You know, I'm really tired of having to vote every two years. Can't the city do something so I don't have to vote so often?' This investigation into four-year terms is being pushed ENTIRELY by the mayor and some members of the council, not by voters. It is truly amazing that the 'problem' of two-year terms has only come to the attention of the city's elected officials after the first fully competitive city election in recent memory in which each and every elected position was in full contention.

The city's primary showcase for the benefits of four-year terms has been the city of Rockville. In August 2018, the city council had the current mayor of Rockville (Mayor Newton) speak about Rockville's shift to four years terms in 2015. Here is the College Park city manager summation of the Rockville Mayor Newton's comments from August (quoted from page 41 of the 11-13-18 Worksession Agenda). "Mayor Newton said the benefits of four-year terms include greater continuity, greater time to work through more complex issues, and improved team building. In Rockville, all council members serve at-large.

She said, with two-year terms, it feels like you are always running for office. Longer terms have allowed their city council to make great strides and accomplish more than ever before. She said she does not think going to four-year terms reduces accountability; the other elected officials and the public hold us accountable.<sup>11</sup>

**Wow**, an elected official publicly states that they are doing a great job and everything is going great. That's something you rarely hear. Never mind that when that speech was given, Rockville was only in year three of their first four year term, so it is hard to imagine what <sup>II</sup> "great strides" that have occurred in the mere nine months of new and extra time they've had beyond what would have been a standard two year term. And in Mayor Newton's opinion, accountability hasn't been reduced. Well, that's her opinion, but that isn't really the one that really counts. It is the voting public that makes that call, and due to the four year term only being three years through, the public hasn't had a chance to weigh in on that yet. And given ur county's track record of public

officials going to jail for corruption, I don't think we can rely on others to keep things clean and free from rot.

The primary argument the city has made in favor of four-year terms has been that they would reduce turnover of council members and allow for longer planning and smoother running of the city. This line of thought is entirely specious. What limited turnover there has been on the city council, most of it is the result of council members choosing not to run for re-election versus being elected out of office. In the last 11 city elections, which encompassed a total of 88 open council seats, by my count, had 28 new council members elected. 7 got their seats by defeating an incumbent and the other 21 got elected because the incumbent did not run for re-election. (see attachment A). Voters are not booting council members off the council on a regular basis. A vast majority of the change on the council is due to incumbent council members simply choosing not to continue to serve on the council.

In my opinion, it seems that people are likely leaving the council because of simple, PREDICTABLE changes in heart/changes in life....i.e. for job that has high time demands and pays poorly, after a few years of service, some people might grow weary of it ....maybe their real job gets more demanding .....maybe their family had a new child/family member becomes ill and they have more important demands on their time....or maybe they just get tired of dealing with headaches that are part of public position and they just don't want to do it anymore. Four-year terms won't fix any of that. If anything, it will make things worse. People might be able to tough out a two-year term if something else comes up in their lives mid session but they won't serve out a four-year term if something does. That means more council seat vacancies and more special elections. That isn't going to help the city run more smoothly. The other clear factor for leaving the council is to run for other political offices, such as city mayor or positions at the county or state level. Four-year terms won't prevent any of those defections either.

Four-year terms will make elections less competitive

While the last two city elections have been competitive, historically speaking, that has generally not been the case (see attachment B). Four-year term of office will make this lack of competition even worse. A four-year term is a much higher barrier for potential candidates to surmount than a two-year term. Jobs are much less certain than they were in the past and may require more frequent relocation. I suspect even Federal workers feel less secure about the

viability of their positions after the recent government shutdown. Longer term will deter younger people (and I'm not talking about students...I'm talking about people under the age of 40) from running for office because it is more likely that their lives will not be sufficiently settled enough where they could honestly make a four year commitment. This will result in less representative council because a large chunk of the community will choose not to run for office because the four years too much of a commitment for most people.

Furthermore, a clear majority of council members who voluntarily left the council did so after either one or two terms. Four-year terms won't stop turnover if most people only want to do the job for two to four years in the first place. (See attachment C)

Longer terms will also create an even higher voter bias towards incumbents vs. new candidates... i.e. the fear of electing someone new/inexperienced vs. someone with some experience. With two-year terms, the impact of choosing 'wrong' is limited. With four-year terms, the impact of choosing 'wrong' is much larger and will likely have many voters deferring to incumbents, even if they have issues with them.

In their first term, some elected officials may do well at serving the public, while others may flounder. Four years is a LONG time to for residents to have to live with someone is not good at serving them. It is worth noting that of the seven incumbents defeated in council races between 1997-2017, five of them were defeated after their first term, meaning voters were tired of them/thought someone else would do better after only just two years on the council.

Four-year terms have zero quantifiable benefits for city residents The supposed benefits of four-year terms espoused by the city are entirely hypothetical (better planning, smoother running council, the sun will shine brighter, it will never rain on weekends, etc) and have ZERO quantifiable

benefit. It is like four-year terms are magical and they will make almost every problem disappear. There is simply the presumption that longer continuity and fewer novices on the council will result in better outcomes. There is no proof this will be the actual case. How the Hollywood Gateway park project worked out is proof that this line of thinking does not hold water. There was no shortage of experienced people involved with that and it still took forever and is vastly over budget.



This 'new people are bad' tone by the supporters of four-year terms smacks of elitism and complete contempt for the electorate. Is there a learning curve for new members of the council?... Sure... Do people going through learning process ask annoying questions that may slow things down at the

start?...Probably....Does someone new coming in every few years and asking the question of "This seems really complicated... what is the reason we're doing it this way? Might there be a better way of doing this?" serve a public function (i.e., questioning past assumptions/approaches)?....Most definitely. Every current sitting member of the council has gone through the exact same learning process as well. No one is born to serve on the council. Everyone has to go through the learning process of city governance.

Similarly, it might be useful to point out that the council doesn't exist to serve the mayor and the council, but rather to serve the city residents. If those residents make the choice to send someone new to the council, one would hope that the mayor and council would respect that choice rather than whine about how new council members are such a drag because they don't know all the ropes on day one.

But four-year terms have big benefits for elected officials However, the city has been oddly quiet about the two clear and quantifiable benefits of four-year terms. The first is that incumbents would have to spend less money on campaigning. Instead of defending their position every two years, they would only have to defend it every four years. Given that many

council members self-finance large parts of their campaign expenses, this is a matter that directly impacts their pocketbook. This likely explains much of the mayor and council's deep interest in this topic. Given that incumbents win almost elections anyway, more than few council members and the mayor likely think 'Why should I have to go through the trouble and expense of running for office every two years when I'm going to win anyway?'

The second quantifiable benefit of four-year terms is that taxpayers wouldn't have to pay for elections every two years but only every four years, effectively cutting the city election expense in half over four years. But the proposed staggering of terms resulting in half council being up for election every two years would nullify these savings (and also negate the supposed benefit of council member continuity since half the council could be replaced/leave).

Most elections expenses {election staff, machines, ballots, public notices, etc) are almost entirely fixed. If half the council is up for election or the entire council is up for election, the cost will be the same. If we are going to have the expense of elections every two years, the taxpayers should get the maximum amount of benefit/choice from that expense... i.e., every seat is up for election, or in other words, 2 year terms.

In conclusion, there seem to be no quantifiable benefits of four-year terms for city residents. The city offers a single test case city, which hasn't even completed its first four-year term and is a city that is vastly different than College Park. In my opinion, there are clear issues that four-year terms would stifle competition and voter choice in city elections as well as making city elected officials less responsive to city resident demands. Two-year terms have served the city well over the years and I see no reason why we should stop using them now. I would suggest that any final report by the committee should try to show what clear and quantifiable benefit four-year terms would offer city residents {not the council or city staff). I do not think you will find any.

David Gray 7306 Radcliffe Dr College Park MD

Attachment A

City of College Park Council Election History 1997-2017

Election Year	District One	District One	District Two	District Two	District Three	District Three	District Four	District Four	# of Novice Council Members Elected
2017	Kennedy	Kabir	Brennan	Dennis	Day	Rigg	Kujawa	Mitchell	2
2015	Nagle	Kabir	Brennan	Dennis	Day	Stullich	Kujawa	Mary Cook	1
2013	Wojahn	Kabir	Brennan	Dennis	Day	Stullich	Hew	Mitchell	2
2011	Wojahn	Kabir	Catlin	Dennis	Day	Stullich	Afzali	Mitchell	3
2009	Wojahn	Nagle	Catlin	Perry	Mark Cook	Stullich	Afzali	Mitchell	3
2007	Wojahn	Molinatto	Catlin	Perry	Mark Cook	Stullich	Hampton	Mary Cook	5
2005	Milligan	Krouse	Catlin	Perry	Fellows	Olson	Hampton	Pena-Melnyk	0
2003	Milligan	Krouse	Catlin	Perry	Fellows	Olson	Hampton	Pena-Melnyk	3
2001	Shroder	Byrd	Catlin	Perry	Fellows	Olson	Hampton	King	2
1999	Shroder	Blevins-Steel	Catlin	Perry	Brayman	Olson	Wanuck	King	2
1997	Murray	Blevins-Steel	Catlin	Perry	Brayman	Olson	Gallagher	King	5

Color Key

<b>White Boxes</b>	Incumbent and/or Former council member wins seat
<b>Black Boxes</b>	Brand New council member wins seat open due to incumbent not running
<b>Gray Boxes</b>	Brand New council member wins seat by defeating incumbent.

Incumbents defeated by new council member

2013: Hew Defeated

2011: Kabir defeats Nagle by 2 votes

2009: Afzali and Mitchell defeat Hampton and Mary Cook

Byrd elected in 2000 special election, re-elected in 2001, defeated in 2003

2001: Wanuck defeated by Hampton

1999: Shroder defeats Murray

Based on election history data provided on city's website.

<https://www.collegeparkmd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/940/ELECTION-RESULTS-for-WEBSITE?bidId=>

Attachment B

**Number of Candidates in College Park  
City Council Districts for elections between 2017-1999**

Number of elected positions		1	2	2	2	2
Election Year		Mayor Number of Candidates	District 1 Number of Candidates	District 2 Number of Candidates	District 3 Number of Candidates	District 4 Number of Candidates
2017		4	4	5	4	4
2015	*	2	2	4	5	4
2013		2	3	2	3	2
2011		1	3	2	3	2
2009		1	5	3	3	4
2007	**	1	4	3	2	2
2005		1	3	2	3	3
2003		1	3	2	2	2
2001		1	2	2	5	3
1999		1	3	4	2	2

Color Key

<b>White Boxes</b>	NO voter influence on election outcome: Voters have no chance to exclude any candidates from being elected
<b>Gray Boxes</b>	LIMITED voter influence on election outcome: Voters have the chance to exclude one candidate from being elected
<b>Black Boxes</b>	FULL voter influence on election outcome:

- \* 1 candidate in District 1 dropped out of the election on election day leaving only 2 electable candidates  
 \*\* Special elections were held in January 2008 to determine one seat in both District 3 & 4

Based on November election result data on the city's website  
<https://www.collegeparkmd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/940/ELECTION-RESULTS-for-WEBSITE?bidId=>

Some may question why I am saying competition is based on exclusion vs. choice since voters don't necessarily have to vote for anyone. Given that candidates would likely vote for themselves, the question is can voters prevent a candidate from winning a seat by their own vote (i.e., could a candidate win a seat with exactly one vote, their own?) So this is looking at how much influence the electorate has over the outcome of a given election.

ATTACHMENT C

**LONGEVITY ANALYSIS OF COLLEGE PARK COUNCIL MEMBERS  
WHO VOLUNTARILY LEFT THE COUNCIL 1999-2017**

District	Name	Last Year Served	Number of Terms Served Before Leaving	Notes
District 1	Nagle	2017	1	Won twice, defeated once, chose not to run for re-election once
District 3	Stulich	2017	5	
District 2	Catlin	2013	8	
District 4	Afzali	2013	2	
District 2	Perry	2011	11	
District 3	Mark Cook	2011	2	
District 1	Molinatto	2009	1	
District 3	Olson	2007	5	
District 3	Fellows	2007	3	Ran unopposed for Mayor 2 years after leaving council.
District 1	Krouse	2007	2	
District 1	Milligan	2007	2	
District 4	Pena-Melnyk	2007	2	
District 4	King	2003	6	
District 1	Shroder	2003	2	
District 1	Belvins-Steel	2000	2	Seat appears to have been refilled via special election in Nov 2000
District 4	Gallagher	1999	1	

**A majority of council members who voluntarily left the council did so after either one or two terms. This means 4 year terms, historically speaking, would have little impact on council seat turn over.**

**Notes**

Excludes current members of the city council

Excludes council members who left council seats to run for mayor (Brayman, Wojahn, Mary Cook, and Mitchell)

Excludes council members who ran for re-election but were defeated (this happened 7 times in the 88 council races between 1997-2017)

Perry & King term count includes elections prior to 1997

Based on election history data provided on city's website.

<https://www.collegeparkmd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/940/ELECTION-RESULTS-for-WEBSITE?bidId=>

4/19/2019 Lee Havis 6812 Dartmouth Ave, College Park MD 20740

I favor keeping the current 2-year, renewal term of office

for all elected officials in the College Park City government. This assures a much better level of meaningful access and accountability for City citizens than would be possible with 4-year terms as proposed to change the charter.

Accountability and access to City elected officials is especially important in College Park, which has grown large and remote from ordinary city residents by the overwhelming pressure for development of infrastructure and services to meet issues of public safety, traffic, and community programs which flow from the domineering influence of the University of Maryland administration.

City citizens already show a relatively low voter turnout, and are therefore easily influenced by the needs and interests of the University of Maryland administration which don't commonly coincide with the home owning population of the city which is the key to a successful community. Greater taxes and control from a centralized, over-spending, and remote City government, discourages this home owning community, which benefits more from lower taxes and a modest level of government spending that aims for the well-being of all city citizens.

The 2020 budget of about 20 million is a case in point representing a 35 percent increase from the level of spending just a few years ago, which at that time, seemed completely

4/30/2019 Suchitra Balachandran 9320 Saint Andrews Pl College Park

I strongly oppose increasing the length of term for Mayor and Council from two years to four years. Voters should find it easy to engage in local government which operates at small scales and should deal with issues of immediate concern to them. Yet, voters in College Park do not engage with their elected leaders or local government as is seen from voting statistics. Only a small percentage of registered voters, of order 10 percent, vote in City elections. Many seats are uncontested and incumbents are rarely voted out of office. The situation is rather moribund. What steps has the Council taken to understand why voter participation is so low? To my knowledge, none. By contrast, Council has made it very

clear that it does not care very much about what the few residents who attempt to engage with the Council say. Why does the Council hold public hearings and with no attempt at deliberating on what they have just heard, vote on the issue at the close of the hearing? That's a slap in the face of people who take the trouble to advocate. Will anything change if the length of term is increased to four years? More voter participation? More accountable electeds? Very likely not.





Charter Review Commission  
Monday, May 23, 2019  
Council Chambers

Name	Present	Absent
Brooks Boliek	X	
Cameron Thurston	X	
Dan Alpert	X	
John Krouse	X	
Nathan Rickard	X	
Nora Eidelman		X
Normand Bernache	X	
Peter King	X	
Ray Ranker	X	
Virdina Gibbs	X	

Also present: Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

Mr. Thurston called the meeting to order at 7:41pm.

1. Review and approve May 13, 2019 minutes: **A motion was made by Mr. Boliek and seconded by Mr. King to approve the May 13, 2019 minutes. Motion carries 9-0-0.**
2. Reviewed revised draft report and corrections were made, in real time, on the computer by Ms. Miller. While reviewing the report, there was a disagreement with verbiage on costs of holding a special election. After considerable discussion, Mr. Ranker made a motion to change the verbiage as follows: “An increase from a two- to a four-year term could increase the likelihood of a special election to fill seats of those who resign before the end of their terms. These special elections would affect the cost to the City.” Mr. Rickard seconded the motion. **Motion carries 6-1-2.**
3. Mr. Alpert will be replacing a table in the Student section of the report. Mr. Ranker has some additional comments to include in the Cost of Election section. That information will be emailed to Mr. Brooks and Mr. Thurston by May 26. Mr. Brooks made a motion, since this is the last the committee will be meeting in person, that the committee can approve changes in style, grammar, Mr. Rickard’s spreadsheet, Mr. Alpert’s table, and number changes in Mr. Ranker’s section via email and a final committee vote, via email, on the report no later than May 30, 2019. Mr. Ranker seconded the motion. **Motion carries 9-0-0.**
4. The final version of the report will be emailed to all committee members to review by May 26. The final report will be emailed to Ms. Miller on the morning of May 31 and she will distribute it to Mayor and Council in their packets.

Mr. Ranker made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. King seconded. **Motion carries 9-0-0.**  
The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, contract secretary.

Charter Review Commission  
Monday, May 13, 2019  
Council Chambers

Name	Present	Absent
Brooks Boliek	X	
Cameron Thurston	X	
Dan Alpert	X	
John Krouse	X	
Nathan Rickard	X	
Nora Eidelman	X	
Normand Bernache	X	
Peter King	X	
Ray Ranker	X	
Virdina Gibbs	X	

Also present: Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

Mr. Thurston called the meeting to order at 7:47pm.

1. Review and approve April 29, 2019 minutes: **A motion was made by Mr. Boliek and seconded by Mr. Bernache to approve the April 29, 2019 minutes. Motion carries 10-0-0.**
2. Reviewed draft report done by Mr. Thurston and Mr. Boliek. The committee thanked Mr. Thurston and Mr. Boliek for the work they did on the report. The following are items that the group would like to have changed:
  - a. Page 2 - Delete Executive Summary and stay with Introduction. Delete paragraph 2 ("Here is a difference...") and paragraph 4 ("An attention to these dangerous..."). Move the 3rd sentence "What the Hamilton and the other founders... up to the first paragraph as the last sentence. Delete the word "the" between What and Hamilton.
  - b. Page 3 -- 4th paragraph - "While public opinion appears to favor..." - move above 3rd paragraph that begin, "In total, 92 citizens..." Rewrite the first sentence as follows: While public opinion appears to favor keeping two-year terms, our charge was to review and evaluate the length of the terms for the offices of Mayor and Councilmembers.
  - c. Page 3 - 5th paragraph - Delete the verbiage ", but did not limit itself to,"
  - d. Page 4 - paragraph after list of themes - my last name is DeWalt (capital W)

- e. Page 5 - 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence - Delete municipal after College Park - should just end "College Park elections."
- f. Page 5 - quote from Suchitra Balachandran -- should not be centered or in italics, just indented, single space
- g. Page 5 - 2nd paragraph, 3rd sentence - delete municipal - sentence should read "voter turnout in elections in College Park..."
- h. Page 6 - 1st graph - add to the Title - 1945 - 1995
- i. Page 6 - 2nd graph - add to the Title - 1997 - 2017
- j. Page 6 - last paragraph -- replace municipal with College Park -- sentence should read "In the last College Park elections conducted in 2017..."
- k. Page 7 - 1st paragraph - 1st sentence - replace municipal with College Park
- l. Page 7 - 1st paragraph, 3rd sentence - replace municipal with College Park
- m. Page 7 - 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence - replace municipal with College Park. Also end the sentence with a period - "has been substantial." Add the following ending sentence "This also coincides with an increase in contested elections."
- n. Page 7 - 1st sentence below graph - delete municipal
- o. Page 8 - 1st paragraph - Delete municipal in 2nd sentence and last sentence.
- p. Page 8 - 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence - delete municipal
- q. Page 8 - 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence - delete municipal
- r. Page 8 - last paragraph, delete sentence - "Professor Hajnal observes:...can move policy their way." **Also delete footnote #8**
- s. Page 10 - 1st paragraph, 1st, 2nd and 3rd sentences - Rewrite as follows: "A factor that may contribute to these results is the number of contested elections held for councilmember positions in each of these districts. Roughly eighty percent of the council elections held in Districts 1 and 3 were contested between 1991 and 2017. Thirteen out of the fourteen elections in District 1 and nine of the fourteen in District 3 were contested while less than half of the council elections held in Districts 2 and 4 were contested (six of the fourteen for both Districts 2 and 4)."
- t. Page 12 - last paragraph, 3rd sentence - Capital "C" for City of Takoma Park
- u. Page 15 - top of page (end of Section A) - final sentence inserted "The primary source of data on this issue is the City of Rockville who transitioned to four year terms for their 2015 election."
- v. Page 15 - Section B, 1st paragraph, 2nd line - "In 2018, the City of Springfield..."
- w. Page 15 - Section B, 1st paragraph, 4th line - after footnote '25' - Replace Three years ago with "In 2016, Laurel, Maryland's..."
- x. Page 16 - Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 - make sure that the word "City" referring to each specific city has a capital "C" - ie the City of Greenbelt, the City of Annapolis, The City of Hyattsville
- y. Page 16 - 3rd paragraph, 4th line, 5th line, 7th line, and 9th line - take out 's from Annapolis and replace with Annapolis'
- z. Page 17 - 1st paragraph - make sure that the word "City" is capitalize for City of Hyattsville (lines 1 and 6)
- aa. Page 17 - Student Participation section - Paragraph 1, last sentence - "We also compared the City of College Park to other cities in the Big 10 Conference." delete "to see...towns do."

- bb. Page 17/18 - Student Participation section - Paragraph 2 - Delete 1st sentence. Start paragraph with and rewrite sentence as follows: "Due to the nature of the City's district set-up, student voices are split among the City's four districts. The bulk of the student population resides in District 2 and District 4, however a significant number also reside in District 3 with fewer living in District 1. **Delete the last sentence on top of page 18 "This makes it more...with one voice."**
- cc. Page 18 - 2nd paragraph, line 1 - Mayor and Council - capitalize "M" and "C"
- dd. Page 18 - 2nd paragraph, line 2 - spell out University of Maryland students (not UMD)
- ee. Chart missing from end of Student participation section.
- ff. Page 19 - top of the page paragraph, last line - delete "February"
- gg. Page 19 - 2nd paragraph, 1st line - Rewrite as follows: "The chart below reflects other cities in the Big 10 Conference..."
- hh. Page 19 - 2nd paragraph, Line 5 - spell out MD to say College Park, Maryland [you have the states spelled out elsewhere, not abbreviations]
- ii. Page 21 - Move quote "City council is freshmen politics. ... can't make a 4 year commitment." - move to Cameron's section
- jj. Page 21 - last quote - "2-year terms give a manor..." - delete this
- kk. Page 21 - rest of quotes - Peter and John will pick 2 to include
- ll. Page 23 - Continuity section - last paragraph - "Councilmember Monroe Dennis" - make Councilmember one word in 2nd and 3rd line and delete "C." from Monroe's name
- mm. Page 35 - Conclusion, 1st paragraph, 2nd line "we hope our examination will inform the Council's decision to pursue a change or leave it be."
- nn. Page 35 - Conclusion, 2nd paragraph, Rewrite as follows: "As the Commission executed its charge, a major underlying theme arose in the public debate over the length of the term of councilmembers: Will a change in terms improve accountability, voter participation, and citizen engagement in College Park?"
- oo. Page 35 - Conclusion, 3rd paragraph, line 1 - change charter to "charge"
- pp. Page 35 - Conclusion, 3rd paragraph, line 3 and line 4 - take out ; and replace with , add "and" - the districts, the timing of City election, recall elections, **and** how to engage students...
- qq. Page 36 - Conclusion, top paragraph, line 2 - delete the words "then maybe"
- rr. Page 36 - Conclusion, 2nd paragraph, line 3 - replace capable with "effective"
- ss. Pages 36-40 - Delete Federalist #53
- tt. Make percentages all the same - either spell out the number and word percentage or use numeral and % sign.
- uu. Mr. Alpert said he would put something in his final version about restricted access and difficulties in campaigning for residential candidates to students living in dorms.
- vv. And a Table of Contents, List of Appendices
- ww. Viridinia was going to switch around her report and said she would update by Wednesday cob:

- i. Last paragraph - delete everything except 1st sentence. Move that sentence "College Park does not currently have a recall provision." to the end of the 1st paragraph
  - ii. 5th paragraph - changed it around - start with In 2017, Bowie residents... and end with In 2018, Bowie residents...
  - iii. 4th paragraph - Divide into 2 paragraphs - start a new paragraph with the sentence beginning "A recall election is triggered in Rockville..."
- xx. Election Costs and a Consideration of Staggered Terms
  - i. page 27 - 1st paragraph, 1st sentence - add , to offset phrase - "...council needs to consider, when undertaking a policy change, is its cost..."
- 3. The committee will need to review Recall Provision, Continuity, Election Costs and a Consideration of Staggered Terms at the next meeting.
- 4. New business
  - a. All final sections of the report, in Word, should be emailed to Mr. Thurston and Mr. Boliek by May 17. The final draft of the report will be sent to the committee members by May 21.
  - b. A motion was made by Mr. Thurston to have a final meeting to review the report prior to submitting to Mayor and Council. Mr. Boliek seconded. Motion carries 10-0-0. The final meeting will be Thursday, May 23 at 7:30pm. Ms. Miller stated that she would not be present for this meeting.

Mr. Ranker made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Alpert seconded. The motion carries 10-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:38pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, contract secretary.

Charter Review Commission  
Wednesday, April 29, 2019  
Council Chambers

Name	Present	Absent
Brooks Boliek	X	
Cameron Thurston	X	
Dan Alpert	X	
John Krouse	X	
Nathan Rickard		X
Nora Eidelman		X
Normand Bernache	X	
Peter King		X
Ray Ranker (7:40pm)	X	
Virdina Gibbs (7:50pm)	X	

Also present: Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

*NB: A quorum was not present until 7:40pm. Prior to the start of the meeting, discussion ensued among the committee members regarding the draft outline and points in various section reports.*

Mr. Thurston called the meeting to order at 7:43pm.

1. Review and approve April 10, 2019 minutes: **A motion was made by Mr. Ranker and seconded by Mr. Boliek to approve the April 10, 2019 minutes with one amendment. Motion carries 6-0-0.**
2. Reviewed draft report outline and sections:
  - a. Mr. Alpert shared the he reached out to the cities with the Big 10 schools and Purdue University sent a 1200-1500 word essay regarding the city election process and student participation. He would like to incorporate parts of it in his section.
  - b. Discussion on how to handle information on 4 year terms and to which section it belongs. Mr. Krouse will discuss with Mr. King as they finalize their section as to whether it should be a part of their section or the section of staggered terms handled by Mr. Boliek and Mr. Bernache.
  - c. Reviewed draft information on Election Costs and Consideration of Staggered Terms. The following suggestions were offered:
    - i. ¶3, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence - The City of College Park will spend \$28K every 4 years instead of every 2 years.
    - ii. ¶10, last sentence – remove.
  - d. Put the Committee charge after the title page
  - e. Move Recall provision after Accountability and before Continuity
  - f. Add a section entitled Conclusion
  - g. Add the final minutes to the Appendix
  - h. Online comments will be closed as of April 30, 2019.
  - i. Grammar points for the report:
    - i. Replace the word “municipal” with “city”.
    - ii. Replace City of College Park using “C”.
    - iii. Neutral gender
  - j. Mr. Thurston is going to re-work the verbiage on his graph to reflect the correct percentages.
3. New business
  - a. All final draft sections of the report, in Word, should be emailed to Mr. Thurston and Mr. Boliek by May 6. The final draft of the report will be sent to the committee members by May 10. The final draft will be reviewed at the May 13 meeting.
  - b. The next meeting will be Monday, May 13 at 7:30pm.

Mr. Alpert made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Gibbs seconded. The motion carries 7-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:41pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, contract secretary.

Charter Review Commission  
Wednesday, April 10, 2019  
Lower Level Conference Room

Name	Present	Absent
Brooks Boliek	X	
Cameron Thurston	X	
Dan Alpert (8:35pm)	X	
John Krouse		X
Nathan Rickard	X	
Nora Eidelman	X	
Normand Bernache	X	
Peter King (7:42pm)	X	
Ray Ranker (7:41pm)	X	
Virdina Gibbs		X

Guests: Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

Mr. Thurston called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

1. Review and approve March 28, 2019 minutes: **A motion was made by Mr. Boliek and seconded by Mr. Thurston to approve the March 28, 2019 minutes with amendments. Motion carries 6-0-0.**
2. Review and approve March 11, 2019 Public Forum verbatim transcript: **A motion was made by Mr. Boliek and seconded by Mr. Bernache to approve the March 11, 2019 Public Forum transcription with amendments. Motion carries 6-0-0.**
3. Reviewed draft report sections:
  - a. Election costs – Mr. Boliek and Mr. Bernache
    - i. The cost of running an election is averaging \$23K - \$28K.
    - ii. There is no way to anticipate costs of onboarding new council members. Staff members time can vary based on the number of manhours each members requires.
    - iii. Staggered elections would result in the same cost to the City as doing elections every 2 years.
    - iv. Suggested to make the report gender neutral.
    - v. Need to take into consideration if a council member runs for Mayor prior to the end of his/her term and wings, the costs of running on special election to fill the council seat would need to be taken into consideration.
    - vi. Mr. Rickard offered that 11 cities have staggered terms with populations of 7000+ people.
    - vii. Take into consideration that if you want more voter turnout, the elections may want to be done at the same time as presidential elections.

- viii. Costs are not relative in non-national elections. This information should be removed.
- b. Defer Candidacy – Mr. Thurston
  - i. Pie chart is excellent – should definitely use for final report
  - ii. Can we show on the graph all new council members who only served a single 2 year term and lost and why they lost? As reviewed it seems like there is Alan Hew in 2015, Christine Nagle in 2011, Mary Cook in 2009, and Donald Byrd in 2003.
  - iii. Should discuss re-districting done in the 1980's.
  - iv. Show the difference in seats: 8 seats from 1945-1951 and 9 seats from 1953 to present.
  - v. How many times has an incumbent lost?
- c. Impact on Candidacy – Mr. Ranker
  - i. It seems that students vote more in their hometowns than in College Park.
  - ii. Information on a potential student running for city council should be clarified whether a 2 year term or 4 year term.
  - iii. Verbiage change to how much money “do candidates spend” on elections...
  - iv. Mr. Ranker needs contact information on former candidates and will work with Ms. Miller.
  - v. Change verbiage to say “37 cycles” not 37 elections.
- d. Responsive and Accountable Government – Mr. King and Mr. Krouse
  - i. Need to enter in the comments for residents pro 4 year term.
  - ii. Mr. King and Mr. Ranker will work on consolidating their information into one section.
- e. Students – Mr. Alpert
  - i. General concern is that students are under-represented.
  - ii. Mr. Rickard stated he would call the city office in Urbana, IL to inquire if students run for office.
  - iii. Add population of students in each district
  - iv. Parts will overlap with Mr. Ranker's section.
- f. Continuity – Ms. Eidelman
  - i. Will need to add some narrative
  - ii. The information on 2 or 4 year elections from Mr. Rickard's information should be incorporated into this section.
- 4. New business
  - a. Mr. Thurston and Mr. Boliek will work together to draft and format an outline, executive summary and appendices for the committee to review. Comments and edits of the reports should be sent by close of business on Friday, April 19 to Mr. Thurston and Mr. Boliek.
  - b. The next meeting will be Monday, April 29 at 7:30pm.

Mr. Boliek made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Rickard seconded. The motion carries 8-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, contract secretary.



Charter Review Commission  
Monday, March 28, 2019  
Council Chambers

Name	Present	Absent
Brooks Boliek	X	
Cameron Thurston	X	
Dan Alpert	X	
John Krouse	X	
Nathan Rickard	X	
Nora Eidelman (7:40pm)	X	
Normand Bernache	X	
Peter King	X	
Ray Ranker	X	
Virdina Gibbs	X	

Guests: Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

Mr. Thurston called the meeting to order at 7:34pm.

1. Review and approve March 11, 2019 minutes: **A motion was made by Mr. King and seconded by Mr. Bernache to approve the March 11, 2019 minutes without amendment. Motion carried 9-0-0.** The Transcript of the March 11<sup>th</sup> Public Forum will be submitted for approval at the next meeting.
2. The various report sections were discussed by each member:
  - a. University Student Participation – Dan Alpert. Mr. Alpert shared his information on City Council Term Limits among the cities with Big 10 universities.
    - i. It was noted that Iowa has a council of 4 At Large members and 3 District representatives. The district representatives and 2 at large members who get the most votes have 4 year terms. The other 2 at large members have 2 year terms.
    - ii. It was noted that Ohio used to have the three winning candidates with the least amount of votes serving 2 year terms. In August 2018, all council members now serve 4 year terms.
    - iii. Question was raised about whether Big 10 University towns held their elections at the same time as the gubernatorial and/or national elections?
    - iv. Mr. Krouse mentioned that College Park does not provide the University of Maryland any services. He asked if any of the other Big 10 universities are included in their respective city boundaries? It was noted that some Big 10 Universities are located across two municipalities.
    - v.

- vi. It was suggested the information could be updated showing the population of each city.
- b. Recall provision – Virdina Gibbs
  - i. Add - College Park doesn't have a recall provision in the City Code.
  - ii. The voter roll is inflated due to the transient nature of university students who register to vote here then typically leave in 4 years. It takes about 8 years to remove a voter from the voter roll when the system is working perfectly.
  - iii. Ms. Miller will provide the Commission with a memo she prepared for the Mayor and City Council about the process for removing voters from the state registry.
  - iv. Local cities of Bowie, Rockville, and Takoma Park do have recall procedures based on varying percentages of voters.
- c. Voter Participation – Nathan Rickard
  - i. There is more voter turnout during national elections.
  - ii. The material shows the trends in voter turnout throughout 50 years.
- d. Frequency of campaigns from the perspective of the candidate – Ray Ranker
  - i. Mr. Ranker will send out his report via email
- e. Cost to the City of running elections – Brooks Boliek
  - i. The average spent on campaigns is \$1520.
  - ii. One mayoral campaign cost \$14,000.
- f. Onboarding of new council members – Brooks Boliek
  - i. Each new council members requires something different. It's hard to determine the amount of staff time.
  - ii. Staff offers tours of every building and department but not every council members takes the tour.
  - iii. Onboarding of new elected officials generally occurs during the first 6 months of their term..
  - iv. The budget is reviewed by the Finance Director with each new council member.
- g. Moving to 4 year terms defer candidacy – Cameron Thurston
  - i. Suggestion was made to add 2009-2013.
  - ii. Suggestion was made to add a column to show new members.
  - iii. How many newly elected had to do onboarding?
  - iv. Suggestion was made to see how many people just didn't run again after one term in office.
  - v. On the City's website, there is an election page which shows the voter statistics and history.
  - vi. Can we show what the trend is? Are fewer people running for office or is it something else?
- h. Accountability – Peter King and John Krouse
  - i. The public opinion seems to lean towards 2 year terms to make people more accountable.
  - ii. Should the public comments be included in sections as appropriate, in the introduction, or just a summary? Ms. Miller stated that often times public comments are included as an appendix to reports. Although this

information is currently online, the website could be refreshed and/or updated and the information could be purged. For an historical record, it might be better to have a written copy somewhere in the report.

- i. Staggered vs Concurrent terms – Normand Bernache
    - i. Staggered terms will require 2 council members per district with 4 year terms.
    - ii. Allows council member to campaign once every 4 years instead of every other year.
    - iii. Provides stability to City Council.
    - iv. Will ease transition of new members
    - v. The City will still have to have an election every 2 years
    - vi. Very draining on staff time and resources.
    - vii. Mr. Boliek stated he would work with Mr. Bernache as it seems the staggered elections and onboarding of new members coincide.
3. New business
- a. Ms. Miller asked if anyone would like to write an article for the Municipal Scene since the public comment period closes April 30.
  - b. Please circulate your rough drafts of the report by close of business on Monday, April 8.
  - c. The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 10 at 7:30pm.

Mr. Ranker made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Boliek seconded. All in favor; no opposed. The motion carries 10-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, contract secretary.

**Charter Review Commission  
Monday, March 11, 2019  
Davis Hall**

**Regular meeting of the Charter Review Commission  
Following Public Forum #2  
Minutes**

Name	Present	Absent
Brooks Boliek		X
Cameron Thurston	X	
Dan Alpert	X	
John Krouse	X	
Nathan Rickard	X	
Nora Eidelman	X	
Normand Bernache	X	

Peter King	X
Ray Ranker	X
Virdina Gibbs	X

Guests: Janeen Miller, City Clerk.

Mr. Thurston called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. following the 7:30 Public Forum.

5. Review and approve March 4, 2019 meeting minutes: **Motion by Mr. Bernache / second by Mr. Rickard to approve the March 4, 2019 minutes without amendment. Motion carried 9-0-0.**
6. Discuss concerns vocalized at second public forum:
  - There is no guarantee that the Council will decide to put the question to a non-binding referendum. A majority of Council would have to vote to do so.
  - If Council decides to put this on a referendum, the public will have an opportunity to speak on the motion.
  - Referendum question shouldn't be worded as just a "yes" or "no"; provide options.
  - Several people suggested adding a recall provision to the Charter if four-year terms are adopted: discussion of whether this issue is outside of the purview of the CRC. Consensus: add as a theme.
  - A resident submitted a stack of signed postcards favoring two-year terms. **Motion by Mr. Thurston/second by Mr. Alpert to scan the cards and post on-line. Motion carried 9-0-0.**
  - Comment about "collegiality" on Council. Hard to quantify or assess. Many candidates run on a slate and agree "not to trash talk each other." Anonymous survey of elected officials?
7. Themes for Report to Mayor and Council. The Commission refined and added themes to include in the report:
  - a. Voter participation - **Rickard**
  - b. Frequency of Campaigns from the perspective of the candidate (time spent and cost) - **Ranker**
  - c. University Student participation (student voter turnout and student participation on Council) - **Alpert**
  - d. Continuity of issues (are two-year terms long enough to complete projects) – **Eidelman and Krouse**
  - e. Onboarding of new council members (staff perspective) - **Boliek**
  - f. Would moving to 4-year terms deter candidacy - **Thurston**
  - g. Cost to the City of running elections – **Boliek**
  - h. Accountability of elected officials to the voters – **King and Krouse**
  - i. Recall provision – **Gibbs**
  - j. Staggered v. concurrent terms - **Bernache**

8. Decide if a third Public Forum is necessary: Consensus was that time constraints will not allow for another forum before we start writing the report. Might be able to schedule something in April, depending on how far along the report is, to take public comment on the draft report.
9. Closing the public comment period: **Motion by Ms. Gibbs / second by Mr. Krouse that comments submitted by April 30 will be included in the record. 9-0-0.** Continue to solicit written comment.
10. Discussion of Report:
  - a. Writing themes/sections assigned (see above)
  - b. Circulate individual drafts by March 25, prior to next meeting.
  - c. Review written comments and circulate any additional themes.
  - d. City Clerk to print out all drafts for review at the next meeting (March 28)
  - e. Delivery of final report in May.
11. Next Meeting: Thursday, March 28, 7:30 p.m., City Hall.

**Motion by Mr. Ranker / second by Mr. Thurston to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.**

Janeen S. Miller	Date
City Clerk	Approved

Charter Review Commission  
Monday, March 4, 2019  
Council Chambers

Name	Present	Absent
Brooks Boliek	X (7:35)	
Cameron Thurston	X	
Dan Alpert	X	
John Krouse	X	
Nathan Rickard	X	
Nora Eidelman	X (7:50)	
Normand Bernache	X	
Peter King	X	
Ray Ranker	X (7:38)	
Virdina Gibbs	X (7:40)	

Guests: Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

Mr. Thurston called the meeting to order at 7:34pm.

1. Review and approve February 11, 2019 minutes: **A motion was made by Mr. Thurston and seconded by Mr. Bernache to approve the February 11, 2019 minutes without amendment. Motion carried 6-0-0.**
2. Review and approve February 11, 2019 Public Forum verbatim comments: **A motion was made by Mr. Thurston and seconded by Mr. Krouse to approve the February 11, 2019 Public Forum verbatim comments without amendment. Motion carried 6-0-0.**
3. Additional documentation for posting. Ms. Miller said she would check the website for the following documents:
  - a. Maryland Municipal League Survey, College Park voter statistics and History of College Park Mayors and Councils
  - b. Mr. Rickard stated that he will forward a copy of the City of Bowie resolution to the committee for consideration for posting.
4. Ms. Miller was asked for the following information to be circulated to the committee:
  - a. Video clips from two 2017 Council meetings where 2- v. 4-year terms were discussed by Mayor, Council and staff.
  - b. Cost of City of College Park elections for the past 10 years.
  - c. Salary of Mayor and Councilmembers for the past 10 years.
5. Other discussion items:
  - a. Mr. Rickard said he will find information on other Big 10 towns and terms of office for Mayor and Council.
  - b. Can a hyperlink be added to the CRC page and direct residents to comment section?
  - c. Mr. Ranker volunteered to work on writing a summary of the elections: cost of campaigns, number of incumbents re-elected, time invested in campaigning and raising funds, how many people run for re-election.
  - d. Mr. Boliek will draft the piece about the staff resources to on-board new Councilmembers.
  - e. All resident comments should be included in the report.
  - f. Will the SGA have any comments? Mr. Alpert stated the SGA is aware of the CRC and he does not know if they will come forth with comments. He will remind the SGA on Wednesday evening about the March 11 Public Forum.

6. Themes for Report to Mayor and Council. The committee discussed several themes and the final list is as follows:
  - a. Voter participation
  - b. Frequency of Campaigns: Time spent and Cost/Finances
  - c. University Student participation
  - d. Continuity of issues – are two-year terms long enough?
  - e. Onboarding of new council members – staff perspective
  - f. Commitment to 4 year terms
  - g. Cost of running elections
  
7. The second Public Forum is Monday, March 11, 2019 at Davis Hall. Providing there is time after the forum, there will be a business meeting. An additional meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, March 28 at 7:30pm in Council Chambers. Ms. Eidelman suggested that a reminder be sent to all civic associations about the next public forum; Ms. Miller thought it had already been sent out by the City's Communication Coordinator.

Mr. Ranker made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Boliek seconded. All in favor; no opposed. The motion carries 10-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, contract secretary.

**Charter Review Commission  
Meeting #2  
Monday, February 11, 2019  
Council Chambers**

Name	Present	Absent
Brooks Boliek	X	
Cameron Thurston, Chair	X	
Dan Alpert	X	
John Krouse	X	
Nathan Rickard	X	
Nora Eidelman	X	
Normand Bernache	X	
Peter King	X	
Ray Ranker	X	
Virdina Gibbs		X

Guests: Janeen Miller, City Clerk, Staff Liaison to the Commission.

Mr. Thurston called the meeting to order at 8:04 pm following the Public Forum.

1. New members of the committee were introduced.

2. Review and approve January 7 minutes: **A motion was made by Mr. King and seconded by Mr. Boliek to approve the January 7 minutes without amendment. Motion carried 9-0.**
3. Elect a Vice Chairperson: **A motion was made by Mr. Thurston and seconded by Mr. Rickard to appoint Brooks Boliek the Vice-Chair. Motion carried 9-0.**
4. Discussion:
  - a. Public comment tonight favored keeping two-year terms. Written comment skews differently.
  - b. Verbatim transcript of Public Forums: **A motion was made by Mr. Krouse and seconded by Mr. Ranker to request a verbatim transcript of tonight's Public Forum and any subsequent Public Forums. Such transcripts will be posted on the website.** Ms. Miller said it would depend on the quality of the audio since the request was made after-the-fact, but if it is adequate, it will be prepared. **The motion carried 9-0.**
  - c. Publish the written comment that has been received by the CRC: The Commission expressed interest in publishing the written comment that has been submitted through the website. Ms. Miller will check with City staff about how this can be done. **A motion was made by Mr. King and seconded by Mr. Boliek to make the on-line comments public. Motion carried 9-0.**
  - d. Identify the themes that are emerging (that could become the framework of the report): CRC members should circulate and/or bring their list of themes to the next meeting for discussion. The approved list could be made available at the next Public Forum.
  - e. Discussion of matters that might merit additional research: average length of time a person remains on Council, average cost of campaigns, how much campaigning is needed, trends in voter turnout, average length of residency, resident participation in City affairs, student voter turnout.
  - f. Discussion of items to post on the Charter Review Commission page on the City's website: Ms. Miller said meeting agendas, approved CRC meeting minutes and approved transcripts of Public Forums would be posted in accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Discussion about the need to balance transparency with overkill by putting too much out there. The value is to show the broad range of material the Commission is considering in doing its research, without appearing to lean one way or the other.  
**A motion was made by Mr. Thurston and seconded by Mr. Boliek that the background information provided to the Commission by the City Clerk be posted, and that the CRC should vote on each additional document to post going forward. Motion carried 9-0.**
  - g. Discussion of whether there should be a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Public Forum: Purpose would be to have a draft for the public to respond to. Concerns expressed about time constraints. No decision.



- h. Document sharing platform to use for drafting the report: Mr. Thurston will research best way to collaborate on the report. Each Commissioner can sign up for the section they want to write. Request to see Rockville's report as a model.
- 5. Next meeting and second forum:
  - a. Next Public Forum should be at Davis Hall. Ms. Miller will check availability for Monday, March 11. Interest in scheduling the next CRC meeting prior to Public Forum so meeting minutes and transcript of tonight can be approved and published in advance. **A motion was made by Mr. Krouse and seconded by Mr. Boliek to hold the Public Forum at Davis Hall on March 11 and the next CRC meeting on March 4, pending availability of space. Motion carried 9-0.**
  - b. Discussion items at next meeting:
    - 1. Review/vote on additional documents to post on the website
    - 2. Develop list of themes
    - 3. Framework/outline for report and volunteers for writing
- 6. Adjourn: On a motion by Mr. Thurston and seconded by all present, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Submitted by Janeen S. Miller

Charter Review Commission  
Monday, January 7, 2019  
Council Chambers

Name	Present	Absent
Brooks Boliek	X	
Cameron Thurston	X	
Dan Alpert		X
John Krouse	X	
Nathan Rickard	X	
Nora Eidelman	X	
Normand Bernache		X
Peter King	X	
Ray Ranker		X
Virdina Gibbs	X	

Guests: Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

Ms. Miller called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

- 1. Members of the committee and guests introduced themselves.
- 2. Ms. Miller reviewed the Resolution 18-R-23, adopted by the City Council on November 20, 2018. The basic premise of the resolution is to evaluate the pros and cons of

lengthening terms of office from two years to four years and if elections for council seats should be staggered or concurrent. She explained that the committee is on a short time period and a report outlining the pros and cons is due to Mayor and Council by May 31, 2019.

3. General “Housekeeping” rules were explained:
  - a. A contract secretary will be at each meeting to take minutes and the meetings will be audio recorded.
  - b. The meetings are open meetings which means the public can attend, but cannot participate in the meeting, unless invited by the Commission.
  - c. The public will be able to express their thoughts and opinions at one of the two open forums held by the committee – one in Council Chambers and one in Davis Hall, per the resolution. Public forums will be audio recorded and have the capability of being televised, if the committee desires.
  - d. Janeen Miller, City Clerk, is the staff liaison for the committee.
  - e. A Chair and Vice Chair will need to be elected.
4. General Discussion (not in any particular order)
  - a. Information requested of Ms. Miller:
    - i. Survey of other Maryland Municipalities on term lengths
    - ii. Minutes of Council meetings/Worksessions/Retreat where this topic was discussed, including the meeting that Rockville Mayor Newton attended.
    - iii. Follow up to see if the ad-hoc subcommittee referenced in the Diamondback article ever met or reported out.
    - iv. Provide election statistics for analysis by the Commission to determine average length of service of elected officials.
  - b. The City Communications Coordinator will advertise the public forum through official city channels:
    - i. Constant Contact
    - ii. City Website
    - iii. Twitter
    - iv. Facebook
    - v. Weekly Bulletin
    - vi. Municipal Scene
    - vii. Announcements at Mayor and Council meetings
    - viii. Civic Associations listservs
    - ix. Email address set up just for this topic
  - c. Mr. Boliek has done a bit of research and will share his information with the groups including any internet links.
  - d. Once report is in a final draft form, send out to public for comments. Looking towards end of April for this final draft report. Committee will review any final comments and make final revisions to ensure report is delivered to Mayor and Council by May 31, 2019.

- e. Take into consideration that students would only be able to vote one time if the City goes to four year elections. Ms. Miller did state that there is a student liaison, appointed by the SGA, to City Council. This is a paid position of \$1650 per year.
  - f. Identify types of issues/"themes" to be relevant for research:
    - i. Continuity of council to work on issues and see to conclusion
    - ii. Amount of time it takes to on-board new council members
    - iii. Accountability of elected officials
    - iv. Cost of elections. Right now elections are budgeted at about \$15K. Will probably go up to \$20K for the November election with the additional polling site and early voting.
    - v. Staff work load associated with elections
    - vi. How the change, if any, will affect the citizens
    - vii. How the change, if any, will affect relations with the University of Maryland
5. Mr. King made a motion to nominate Cameron Thurston as Chair. Mr. Boliek seconded. All in favor; no opposed. Motion carries 7-0-0.
6. Mr. King made a motion to defer the selection of a Vice Chair. Mr. Boliek seconded. All in favor; no opposed. The motion carries 7-0-0.
7. Mr. Thurston made a motion to hold the first of two public forums on Monday, February 11, 2019 at 7:30pm with a business meeting to follow, if time permits. Mr. Boliek seconded. All in favor; no opposed. The motion carries 7-0-0. Ms. Miller explained that the normal standard for a public forum is to have a sign-in sheet; call each person up to the podium with "Mr. Smith is up, Mr. Jones is on deck"; state name and either address or neighborhood; limit comments to three minutes with a timekeeper.

Mr. Thurston made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Krouse seconded. All in favor; no opposed. The motion carries 7-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03pm.